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The Presbyterian Record

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PRESBYTERIAN
Record

January 2007



Decoding the Gnostics: Wisdom or Gnonsense?

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thomas scribsit

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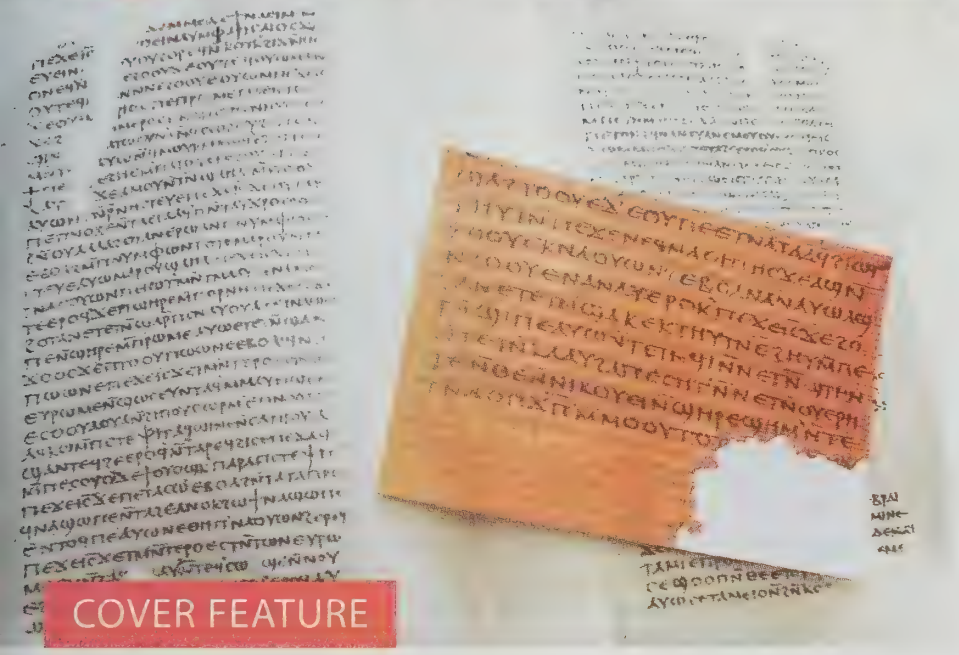
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JANUARY 2007



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The Gnostic gospels are old news in a modern context

by Joel Coppieters

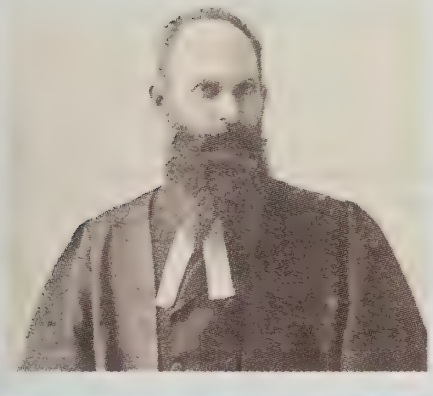




PHOTO: (TOP) AP PHOTO/ THE PANTAGRAPH, LORI ANN COOK

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On the cover: *Evangeliar aus Trier oder Echternach, Szene: Der Tetramorph.* An 8th century manuscript illumination from the Carolingian Renaissance. WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.

Note: Presbytery Profile will reappear in the March issue



Ask the right questions

Hero, fool or traitor? Those are now the three possibilities for Judas, the onetime apostle, based on the Bible and a recently published text. • The New Testament is clear that Judas was a traitor. But the publication in April of the *Gospel of Judas*, a 1,700-year-old Coptic document, made headlines with its claim that Judas was a hero: the disciple, in fact, to whom Jesus entrusted his deepest secrets: "Jesus said to him, 'Step away from the others and I shall tell you the mysteries of the kingdom.'"

But in early December, a New Testament scholar at Acadia University said the translators made a mistake. He believes an accurate reading shows Judas to have been duped.

Either way, the notion of secret knowledge in the Gospel of Judas is a mark of Gnosticism, the subject of this issue's cover story.

Interest in secret knowledge about the afterlife has heightened recently over the publication of several works about Gnosticism and especially through the popularity of the novel and movie *The Da Vinci Code*.

We want the secret to immortality and the aphorism "knowledge is power" was never more apt than in respect of this quest to live forever with God or even to become divine.

The desire for such knowledge is rooted in our (fallen) humanity: "See, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever." (Genesis 3:22)

Gnosticism is also marked by a sharp division between the material and the spiritual. By Jesus' time, philosophers understood that God was immaterial and beyond time and space. Many people therefore rejected the idea that God could have anything to do with matter: could not have created this mutable world, certainly could not have become incarnate.

Those who were eventually called Gnostics rejected Christian teaching that everyone will have a heavenly body at the Resurrection. And they believed only those who were worthy of knowing the secret teachings would be admitted into heaven.

We may smirk at such ideas, but the temptation is powerful. The human drive to know the answer to every problem, to have the solution for every ethical dilemma is evident in Christianity even today.

But ethics is not a matter of looking up the right answer like Harry Potter trying to find the right spell to win the Quidditch World Cup.

Increasingly these days, theologians and ministers are suggesting that in matters of faith and ethics it is more important to ask the right question than to find the right answer—if in fact there is only one "right" answer.

It's a venerable and biblical way of approaching a problem. Clearly, there are some hard and fast rules in the Bible. Just as clearly, some rules change over time. Even in the Bible. Jesus himself re-interpreted the Holiness Code, little of which we follow today.

And Jesus was fond of asking questions. When challenged about temple versus Roman coinage, his first response is a question: whose image is on the coin?

One of the most famous examples of asking the right question is the 13th-century theologian Thomas Aquinas's Summa Theologica, (the Sum of Theology). Aquinas's teaching about God and creation is directed by a series of questions. He leads the reader to an answer by referring to quotes from scripture and major theologians who lived before him.

Faced with two apparently contradictory statements, Aquinas doesn't pick one over the other. Instead, he asks what question the authors were answering. By so doing, by asking the right question, he reveals that appearances are deceiving; that the apparent contradictions evaporate when properly examined.

We might do well to take a page from Aquinas. The interest in New Age spirituality and people's ability to believe the most fantastic parts of a novel such as The Da Vinci Code are not always best met with a dogmatic rebuttal.

People are not stupid. Asking why they believe something we think is wrong may reveal deeper questions. In other words, asking the right question may uncover even more questions and, paradoxically, get closer to the truth.

The current interest in Gnosticism should not threaten Christians. It should be seen as an opportunity for evangelism and faithful questioning.

David Harris

letters

Microcredit in Canada

The Nobel Peace Prize awarded to Muhammad Yunus and the Grameen Bank for their development of micro credit is truly exciting as is PWS&D's involvement with microcredit around the world. Microcredit is also needed in Canada and groups in many Canadian communities are working to provide loans to those who do not meet the requirements of traditional financial institutions.

The Ottawa Community Loan Fund was formed five years ago to provide microcredit in Ottawa. We provide loans of up to $15,000 to start or expand small businesses. We also provide tuition loans to internationally trained workers so they can get their Canadian accreditation in their profession. So far we have provided loans to teachers, nurses, doctors and bio tech workers for accelerated courses that lead to employment that utilizes the education and experience they bring to Canada.

We have made over $600,000 in loans into the Ottawa Community. All our loan capital has been donated by individuals and foundations. They are very happy to know that their donation will continue to work in the community as loans are made and repaid.

Our loan repayment rate is over 90 per cent but our real success is helping people be self-sufficient and really use their talents.

Margaret Lavictoire
President, Ottawa Community Loan Fund, Ottawa

The eternal impact

New to the city of London, I went to the closest Presbyterian Church. I never realized how intimidating it is for someone new to just walk into a church they've never been to before and sit down—until I did it myself. Of all the pews we could have chosen, we sat in one that had been occupied by the same family for over 30 years! And boy did they let us know it! No kind or encouraging words there. In fact, no words at all. Just nasty looks!

Since childhood, I've been going to the same church in Hamilton and happily sitting in the same pew for what seems like forever. I can relate to the comfort level we feel when sitting in our pews and looking forward to seeing the familiar faces around us every week.

But what happens when someone new comes to church and sits in the pew? Suddenly, I was the outsider invading the pew! Do we have the right to ask these newcomers to move? Or glare at them as if we're season's ticket holders? At a time when church attendance is at an all time low, we need to encourage people to seek God—not drive them away!

A little kindness and humility goes a long way. We might need a gentle reminder that we don't own the pews that we sit in every Sunday. We're at church to worship God and it doesn't matter where we sit to do that!

Sadly, if this had been my first experience going to church, it probably would have been may last. But we joined a different Presbyterian congregation with a much more positive outcome.

As Phil Callaway states in his September article, "You may never know the eternal impact you make when you choose your words prayerfully and carefully." I do now.

Kathryn Back
London, Ontario

Eighty is the new 18, cont'd

G. Jean Elliott asks what Jesus really was like, and by implication, whether the Bible tells us enough about Jesus. Many such questions are asked nowadays (but it is nothing new!), even by devout Christians, and not only in the group who "do not attend (church) regularly now."

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Canada Magazines Canada

Pontius' Puddle



The other contributor, Robert Harvey, refers to the history (and geography?) of the Old Testament, and that "if we respect biblical truth, then we must allow that truth to be applicable today." Then it is remarked that, as the God of the Old Testament spoke to prophets, He should also speak to the church today. This argument can be made in one observation, but the vital point is: Does He not speak to the church today—to Billy Graham, to Mother Theresa, to Beyers Naudé and Bishop Tutu of South Africa, and a host of believers in the world today? And to you, if you call to God in despair or in great joy?

To my way of thinking the significance accorded to the Old Testament in our worship of Christ has clouded the real impact of the Gospel. We have to come to clarity about the function of the Old Testament. Jesus declared that He was sent by God the Father to teach us about God and what is expected of his followers. He made everything new. He admonished his followers not to store the new wine of his message in the old holders. Christ came to this world, this natural world in which we dwell. He came as a man, to proclaim the Gospel of salvation, of forgiveness, to show us how God is. And not to demonstrate his might, that He is able to resolve any natural phenomenon by supernatural means. A decision to follow Christ depends not on wonders, but on the conviction laid in our hearts by the Holy Spirit of God. The late Ferdinand Deist, theologian and Old Testament student, once declared that he does not think that the church can expect anything more of him than to confess that he accepts and believes in the atonement of Jesus Christ our Lord. That is the complete story.

To follow Christ is a choice one has to make, a free personal decision. I find it difficult to understand why even an honest but nominal Christian can exert him/herself to ask questions about the message of Christ and the Bible. If the Gospel is important to any person, one should consider what one's response will be should Christ ask, as to his disciples: Do not you also want to go away? Where will one go to then? The crux of this enduring matter will always be: Whose banner am I running with in this one life given to me?

John Kirstein
Oakville, Ont.

If Robert Harvey's reference is to the same Rev. Donald Kemble who was minister of the church where I was a member, and his daughter to whom I taught piano—he was not a Netherlander but a native of Chester, England.

Joyce Trapp
Via email

G. Jean Elliot and Robert Harvey have a right to their own opinions but not to their own facts and I think they might add to their reading some other books on the future of Christianity. *The Next Christendom, the Coming of Global Christianity* by Philip Jenkins, professor of history at Pennsylvania University, provides information of which the general public is unaware. Jesus in Beijing: *How Christianity is Transforming China and Changing the Global Balance of Power* by David Aikman, former Beijing bureau chief for *Time* magazine, is another book about the life of the Church today. Jenkins also published a book in 2006, *The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South.*

Perhaps more than any other historian in the affluent North, Jenkins understands how the church in the Global South will transform Christian faith in the world. The new book challenges our usual reading of the Bible with profound insights from Christians who help us to learn truths that much of Western Christianity has forgotten. This book offers a clear, balanced and com-

Christ came to this world, this natural world in which we dwell. He came as a man, to proclaim the Gospel of salvation, of forgiveness, to show us how God is. And not to demonstrate his might, that He is able to resolve any natural phenomenon by supernatural means

prehensive explanation of the ongoing revival in the southern hemisphere and helps in our understanding the future of the church.

Jenkins calls our attention to the fact that Christianity's centre of gravity is moving inexorably southward. He finds that the faith of the South is first and foremost biblical. In the South many Christians identify with the world portrayed in the New Testament, until very recently a society of peasants, farmers and small craftsmen. It is also of a world where Christians are persecuted just as early Christians were.

Global South Christians are reading the Bible with fresh eyes and coming away with new and sometimes startling interpretations. They are finding very orthodox Christian teaching and also ideas that are socially liberating, especially with regards to women's rights. Across Africa and Latin America many Christians are social activists in the forefront of a wide range of liberation movements.

Kenneth G. McMillan
Mississauga, Ont.

Most stimulating

I have just finished reading John Visser's excellent biography of W. W. Bryant which was twice reviewed in October, and found it to be a most stimulating book on theology since my earlier reading of Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich.

As both reviewers point out, the main concern is, "How is this meaningful to us today?" I believe the book should be essential reading not only for Presbyterian study groups but for all Christians of every denomination. If Dr. Bryant's insights are ignored, it seems inevitable that the church will continue to decline.

Mary Dowling
Fergus, Ont.

Corrections

Shannon Covey was misidentified in People and Places, November. And each new member of Osgoode, Vernon, Ont., received a Bible from their WMS.

The photograph of James Croil, the inaugural editor of the *Presbyterian Record* was courtesy of Presbyterian Church Archives.

Andrew Foster's poem Give Me Tears For Christmas, published in December, first appeared in *Hay and Stardust: Resources for Christmas to Candlemas*, edited by Ruth Burgess, Wild Goose Publications, Glasgow.

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GOO (God's Outstanding Offspring) from the Kirkfield, Bolsover and Woodville Pastoral Charge held a Make Hunger History Event in March. They helped prepare and serve about 70 people an Out-of-the-Ordinary Dinner, which is a simulation of the world eating together, the haves and the have-nots. On Sunday morning they lead a joint worship service with about 100 in attendance. The generous support of the congregations resulted in $1,353 being sent to PWS&D for hunger related needs.



This banner led a walk-a-thon in June by members of Dixie, Mississauga, Ont., that raised $1,600 for PWS&D's ongoing AIDS relief efforts in Malawi. The Partners Meeting Friends in Malawi course prepared the walkers and was the motivation for the banner. And, in July, Annemarie Klassen, who wrote about her adventures in Malawi last year in the *Record*, accepted the cheque.

For more People & Places submissions please visit our website: www.presbyterianrecord.ca

HAD CAKE LATELY? Share your celebrations with the rest of the church. Send your stories to PnP@presbyterianrecord.ca along with your digital photographs, 300 dpi minimum, high quality JPEGs. Or mail the photographs to: The Record, 50 Wynford Dr., Toronto, M3C 1J7.

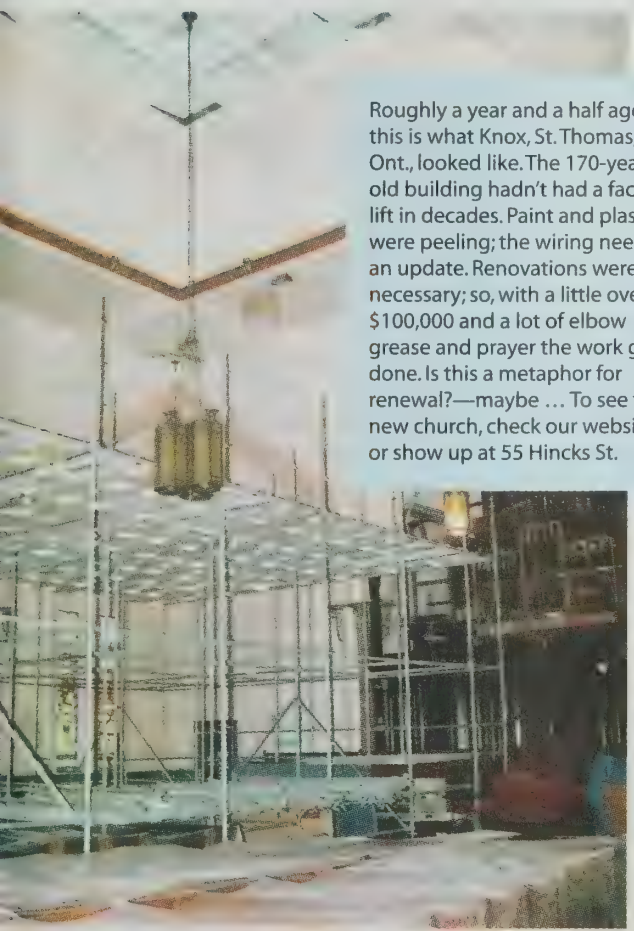
To be considered for People and Places, photographs should be sharp and everyone clearly identified. The *Record* reserves the right to reject any photos not of sufficient quality. Photographs cannot be returned.



They've been a team in many ways for more than half a century. Mary and Wyman Waddell have been secretary-treasurer at North Tryon, P.E.I., for five decades; along with serving the church in many other ways. And, they're life partners, of course, and have six children, five of whom are active members of the church.



Rev. James Nesbit established St. Paul's, Prince Albert, Sask., 140 years ago. The present church building is 100 years old. This great legacy was celebrated with cake, of course—along with a history book and penitent worship—in July. From left, Martha Prasse, chairperson of the Centennial Committee, and member Gladys Gillies get the party started. To see a Rev. Dr. in kilt please turn to our web site.



Roughly a year and a half ago this is what Knox, St. Thomas, Ont., looked like. The 170-year-old building hadn't had a face-lift in decades. Paint and plaster were peeling; the wiring needed an update. Renovations were necessary; so, with a little over $100,000 and a lot of elbow grease and prayer the work got done. Is this a metaphor for renewal?—maybe … To see the new church, check our website, or show up at 55 Hincks St.



He went to Knox College, Toronto, in 1968, graduating three years later. He spent 17 years at a three-point charge near Sarnia, Ont., and in 1988 he became minister of St. Paul's, Simcoe, Ont. The much-beloved Rev. John Cruickshank retired this May. He and his wife Jackie have four children and nine grandchildren.

SPOTLIGHT



Shaneil Keesic and her younger sister Desiree rescued a handicapped youth after bullies coerced a group of eight- to 12-year-old children to shut the youth into the shed and set it on fire. The sisters, unafraid of the bullies, tried to open the door. An adult heard their cries and helped. "Shaneil and Desiree had been taught that God would want them to help someone in trouble," said Rev. Margaret Mullin, director of Anishinabe Fellowship Centre, which serves as one half of WICM along with Flora House. The girls attend WICM's Sunday School. In the photo, from left: Shaneil, Desiree, their brother Fred and mom Cher.

Diversity and bequests hot topics at Assembly Council

Assembly Council adopted a draft policy on racial harassment entitled Growing in Christ: Seeing the Image of God in Our Neighbour, at its November meeting. "The Presbyterian Church in Canada welcomes its cultural diversity," states the policy. "Both at the congregational and national level, the Presbyterian Church will actively involve the cultural diversity in its midst when it comes to decision-making, service on boards and committees, preparation for ministry in the church, representation of the church at all levels and employment within the church."

Discussed extensively, there were still questions surrounding certain aspects of the policy, such as seeking legal counsel and issues of clarity, so the policy was adopted in principle and will return to the council's March meeting before heading to General Assembly. The policy deals with issues of inclusion, includes definitions pertaining to race and ethnicity, offers guiding principles when dealing with racial harassment and outlines steps to take if a person makes such a claim.

Council also instructed the ad-hoc committee on diversity and racial harassment to add two people "to enhance the diversity of the committee." There was also discussion on fostering a grassroots movement in the church to encourage minorities to become leaders—whether on national committees, as elders or committee members in their congregations, or as national or regional staff.

"In 10 years, it is our hope that the leadership of the church will reflect the racial diversity within the Presbyterian Church in general and will resemble the diversity found in Canadian society," said Rod Ferguson, convener of the ad-hoc committee. He will be succeeded by Rev. Dale Woods, minister at First, Brandon.

Rev. Victor Kim, minister at Grace, Calgary, noted that the PCC already includes people of various races and ethnicities (one-tenth of worshippers in Presbyterian congregations are Korean). "We don't want token things happening," said Kim. "What will we do as leaders to send an example to our church and to send an example to our

'In 10 years, it is our hope that the leadership of the church will reflect the racial diversity within the Presbyterian Church in general and will resemble the diversity found in Canadian society'

world, saying this is The Presbyterian Church in Canada?"

Assembly Council discussed other issues including:

Effective Jan. 1, 2007, the travel allowance for multiple-point charges will be changed to a maximum of $4,920 per year. This is up 16.7 per cent from the previous rate. The amount had been unchanged since 1994.

A new treasurer's handbook will be available online, free of charge, and will be emailed to congregations early this year. The Chief Financial Officer, Steve Roche, oversaw the project and it was reviewed and contributed to by several financial professionals.

The council accepted an invitation from the Presbytery of London to host the 2011 General Assembly.

The Personnel Policy Committee presented a policy on conflict of interest for church office staff that was approved by council. Any staff member who "might find him/herself in a position of possibly benefiting or appearing to benefit from a decision taken by the organization relating to the discharge of their duties and responsibilities" must declare the conflict to their supervisor. This applies to work on committees, to their position at church offices and includes both contract and full-time employees.

Undesignated bequests have become a topic of increasing interest and importance over the last few years, with the creation of the Bequest Revenue Fund in 2004 and the Planned Giving office a year later. Over the past five years, an annual average of $400,000 has been realized, and such generosity is expected to continue. Council approved an interim policy for the allocation of undesignated bequests, to be reviewed at the Nov. 2007 meeting.

The policy states that the first priority will be maintaining a $1.6-million balance (with deposits of no more than $200,000 a year) in the Bequest Revenue Fund, which will help sustain the church in years of decreased givings. It will also provide the $280,000 needed annually (as of 2008) to address increases in grants to colleges for increased professorial stipend and increases to executive stipend at the national office. The colleges will receive 10.13 per cent of undesignated bequests (increased from 8.6 per cent), which covers the increase in grants to the colleges.

After these allocations, The Life and Mission Agency can request up to 35 per cent of undesignated bequests for mission priorities. The remaining 65 per cent will be allocated by the Assembly Council upon recommendations from the Finance Committee each year based on numerous guidelines including goals that are national in scope, last no more than five years, are not for permanent staff positions in any area of the church, and will initiate new programs and enhance and expand the mission of the church. As of the end of November, the church had $2.6-million in undesignated bequests.

– Amy MacLachlan

Fee says LMA must change to meet new challenges

The Life and Mission Agency Committee met outside of Ontario for the first time, gathering at Surrey Presbyterian Church in British Columbia in November. The Korean congregation offered the invitation, and hosted the meetings. Committee members visited area congregations, missions and schools. Mary Fontaine, founder of the native Hummingbird Ministries mission in Vancouver, visited the committee.

General Secretary Rev. Rick Fee said religion is becoming deinstitutionalized and the LMA must change along with it. He also mentioned strategic planning, and the need for increased cooperation among departments in the national office, and called for a new focus on targeting seniors as volunteers. Finding ways for the national office to better serve congregations was also mentioned, as was the need to stay in touch with the church's ethnic ministries and congregations.

- The committee is considering translating Leading With Care into Korean. Presbyterians Sharing and Planned Giving brochures have already been translated. Some materials have been translated into Hungarian as well, along with wedding, communion and baptismal services. Living Faith and a statement on offering sanctuary have been translated into French.
- Lori Ransom, the Healing and Reconciliation Animator, encouraged congregations to set aside one Sunday in May or June to focus on healing and reconciliation. An advisory committee to assist Ransom was to meet in December to discuss how to move forward and how to sustain initiatives once Ransom's one-year contract is up.
- A review of the regional staffing model by the LMA and WMS is in the works, in preparation for the report to General Assembly in 2008. The committee decided to hire an external consultant to begin the review which will consider things like job descriptions, stipend and the effectiveness of the current regional staffing model, and will involve reviewing previous documentation, interviewing regional staff, the regional staff advisory committee conveners and members of the LMA, WMS and the Atlantic Missionary Society.
- An online Sunday school teacher-training program was endorsed by the committee. The ecumenical endeavor involves five North American denominations: the PCC, PC(USA), Moravian Church in America, Reformed Church in America and Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

– with files from Keith Knight

Assisting the poor

Microcredit loans are a significant factor in fighting poverty | BY CAROL SMITH

The African drumbeat beckoned the delegates from the hallways of a Halifax convention centre in November into the large meeting room. As we followed the drumbeat, it drew us to an open area where African dancers were performing. Later I came to the conclusion that the passion and the power of their dance expressed the synergy that took place at the Summit. It was the kind of synergy that happens when people from around the world come together for a noble purpose—assisting the poor. The cynical were inspired by the idealists and the idealists (like myself) got a taste of reality and practicality.



The author with Shahjahan Ali, general manager of the Grameen Bank.

As a delegate representing my presbytery and the Atlantic Mission Society, I came to the Global Microcredit Summit, in Halifax in November, with a mixture of interests. Like many, I believe in the basic concept of microcredit—loans to help the poor start small businesses, to provide a way out of poverty for those who have been denied access to traditional banking services. Growing up in rural Nova Scotia, I experienced first hand what happens when poor people are denied access to financial services. Many are forced to meet financial needs through expensive finance companies, often leading to long term financial burdens, or they are reduced to accepting a life of poverty. Can microcredit assist the poor, whether in Canada or in the developing world? The answer is yes and no.

First, the positive: The poster child for the microcredit movement is the Grameen Bank and its founder Mohammad Yumas, recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize just weeks before the conference. Many poor people in Bangladesh, especially women, have benefited from microcredit loans. Grameen has provided a model for other microcredit initiatives around the world. Shahjahan Ali, general manager with the bank, explained to me that the employees of the bank are highly motivated by the results they see for themselves as they work with the people. Without a doubt, this continuous dialogue and grassroots involvement with the people they serve is a factor in their success.

Microcredit services are assisting the poor as they become part of existing development programs. Presbyterian World Service and Development has been engaged in this work for some time—microcredit as part of other programs, addressing the fact that financial services are only one of the issues which prevents the poor from improving their lives. Many delegates were representing non-governmental agencies who came to seek out microcredit initiatives which might partner with them or to learn how to offer these services themselves. As a denomination we will need to continue to gain knowledge, to find best practices and good partnerships. I learned that effective involvement in microcredit initiatives requires (to paraphrase an article I read) skills, vision and access to research.

There are challenges in the microcredit movement. Now that it has gained mainstream acceptance, there is a danger that it will be taken over by institutions whose bottom line is not assisting the poor but rather a sizable profit motive. It was noted repeatedly that micorcredit is not a charity but a business, that institutions have to cover their costs of providing services and in some cases, these costs are very high, leading to high interest rates. If interest rates are too high, then it seems that microcredit is not the answer. A different approach is needed which leads to other concerns.

Unfortunately the good work that is taking place as a result of the microcredit movement is often negated by those who see it as the magic bullet that will address the problem of world poverty. It was gratifying to hear this pitfall addressed by Seth Asimakos, manager of the Saint John Community Loan Fund. In his presentation, he pointed out that microcredit is only one of the tools needed in the fight against poverty. He suggested that national and international trade practices, governmental development funding initiatives and issues of war are amongst other factors contributing to poverty. He also noted that the Canadian welfare system does not necessarily encourage independence.These comments, along with many others at the conference, emphasized many of the issues related to ending poverty and call for structural changes—the long term work of doing justice in our local communities and in our global community. – *Rev. Carol Smith is a former convener of General Assembly's International Affairs Committee and currently a member of the Presbytery of Halifax and Lunenburg.*

Churches support change to let refugees appeal

A PRIVATE MEMBER'S BILL that will grant appeals to refugees being sent back to their countries from Canada was slated for a second reading in the House of Commons in early December. Bill C-280 calls for the implementation of the Refugee Appeal Division, which was part of the 2001 Immigration and Refugee Act and would allow those who are denied refugee status to appeal the decision based on the merits of their case. This stipulation was intended to balance a previous government decision that reduced the number of adjudicators in a refugee hearing from two to one. The appeal process was never implemented, leaving life and death decisions up to a sole adjudicator. Then-Minister of Immigration Denis Coderre promised to implement the appeal process within one year, but so far this has failed to happen.

The current bill is the subject of an urgent action campaign led by KAIROS—Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives—which is supported by the Presbyterian Church. The organization is asking individuals to contact their member of parliament to express their support for the bill. Watch for the outcome of the bill's reading in a future issue of the Record. *–with files from KAIROS*

Correction and apology

A NEWS STORY in the December issue about allegedly missing funds at Ormstown Church, Que., included several unproven allegations against various individuals. While police are investigating, no one has been charged and there is yet no evidence of any wrongdoing.

The *Record* apologizes to those involved for suggesting any cover-up or obstruction and especially to the former minister, Rev. John McPhadden, for suggesting the matter was the cause of his resigning from the congregation.

We deeply regret any embarrassment the story caused.

– David Harris



Kaltoom waits for peace in Darfur

GILLIAN SANFORD, ACT-CARITAS

Kaltoom Adam Ishak fled her village when it was attacked by gunmen. "I didn't take anything, just my baby and the clothes I was wearing. There was no time," she says. She has joined the over 2.5 million people displaced from their homes in Darfur, Sudan. She is living through what the United Nations described as the "world's worst humanitarian catastrophe." And the situation keeps getting worse.

Action by Churches Together local members – with the support of PWS&D and churches around the world – are working hard to care for the displaced. A deep well provides water for thousands – and protection for women who would otherwise leave the confines of the camp to look for water. A school helps children traumatized by war continue their education and begin to heal. A clinic helps malnourished children regain their strength. The needs are overwhelming and it is barely enough – but for people like Kaltoom, it is a fragment of hope.

Share hope. Support PWS&D.

PWS&D's relief and development programs operate because people and congregations financially support the work. PWS&D receives no funds from Presbyterians Sharing... Make a donation in the name of another and PWS&D will send a Gift of Hope card to them on your behalf.

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A leading Christian in China

Disowned by her parents, minister finds faith behind China's red wall

BY AMY MACLACHLAN

She grew up in China—her parents devoted members of the country's Communist Party and therefore unsupportive of her Christian faith. Rev. Ying Gao, recently appointed vice president of China's Nanjing Theological Seminary, remembers the roadblocks along her journey of faith. "My mother was so angry," said Gao, about the day in 1980 when she told her family she became a Christian. "She conceptualized it as superstitious, backwards and counter-revolution, which was the perception of Christianity then." Despite her mother's warnings that she would sever their relationship if she went through with it, Gao enrolled in seminary, following God's call to be ordained.

It wasn't until 1989, however, that the two women would officially put aside their differences. While she was at seminary in California, China's famed protest in Tiananmen Square erupted. Concerned for her family's safety, Gao phoned her mother. "She said sorry for all those years [of no contact]. She shed tears and I shed tears and we had reconciliation." Unfortunately, Gao's mother died soon after, without a final visit between mother and daughter.

Today, Gao is a minister with the China Christian Council. She was in Canada since 2005 working towards a PhD at the Toronto School of Theology, sponsored by the Presbyterian Church, the Anglican Church of Canada and the United Church of Canada. She returned to China last March to assume her new position. When she eventually takes over from Bishop K.H. Ting who is over 90 years old and the seminary's long-serving president, Gao will be one of the three most influential persons in the CCC.

The fact that she's a woman doesn't faze her. "In the last 20 years, women's ordination has increased dramatically, at a faster rate than men. One-fifth of the pastors are now women." In her church in Beijing, the largest in that city, Gao said 80 per cent of the work is done by women, who have leadership roles as laity and in ordained positions. She said women also account for a higher number of parishioners.

Christianity in China exists—in its official form—through the China Christian Council, the Protestant body representing 20 million Christians (or one per cent of the Chinese population). The council prides itself on being post-denominational, although Gao said the traditions and history of denominations still exist, even though everyone is grouped under this one umbrella. Critics of the CCC argue that because of its close ties to the government, the council is merely another arm of the Communist regime, restricting religious freedoms. Others say the council unites Christians, giving a structure to the church's existence, along with rights and responsibilities. It also helps connect the church to national identity—a key to Christianity's survival in China.

"In the last 20 years, women's ordination has increased dramatically, at a faster rate than men. One-fifth of the pastors are now women."



Rev. Ying Gao with Rev. Dr. Dorcas Gordon, principal of Knox College, during a recent visit to China.

House churches also exist, created by those unwilling to submit to the government's requirements in order to function officially. These underground churches exist on their

own, practicing what they wish. Public gatherings are not allowed, unless they receive prior confirmation from the council and their activities cause no disturbances.

Many Christians attend registered church services as well as the smaller, more intimate house churches. Gao said this is often because of the desire for fellowship, a closer connection to the pastor and greater spiritual nurturing. The ratio of pastors to Christians in China is 1 to 7,000. As a result, personal attention is a rare luxury. "I sensed the frustration of my parishioners," she said, of the inability for members to receive ample one-on-one time with a minister. "They were so pleased just to be able to shake my hand."

Gao said training more ministers will continue to be a huge challenge for the church. Reaching remote areas

'My vision is that the [Nanjing] seminary can become a model for educational institutions in China, one which could provide adequate and sufficient spiritual leaders to meet the needs at the grassroots'

where Christians are often left without trained leaders is also a concern, as is educating and nurturing lay persons who are often the only leaders in their congregations. She is excited about a project to build a new campus at Nanjing, increasing its capacity from 170 to 500 students. "My vision is that the [Nanjing] seminary can become a model for educational institutions in China," said Gao, "one which could provide adequate and sufficient spiritual leaders to meet the needs at the grassroots."

Despite difficulties along the way, Gao's family are now supportive of her career choice and she is in regular contact with them. "I think my mother would be very proud of me," said Gao, "and of what I'm doing now."

PHOTO: © 2007 JUPITERIMAGES



A very brief history of Christianity in China

FOUR CHRISTIAN MOVEMENTS were needed for Christianity to take hold in China. As a result of a colonial past, a Communist government, cultural revolution and a history of a patriarchal and culturally obedient society, Christianity has come and gone several times as the political and social contexts in China change. Below is a brief outline of major events in Chinese-Christian history:

635 A.D. – Christianity first introduced by a Syrian missionary. Church survived for 200 years before dispersing.

1275 A.D. – Catholic missionaries came in high numbers, churches built, Christians found favour with rulers, but no root in Chinese faith and culture.

1500 A.D. – Catholic missionaries try to adapt Christianity to Chinese culture – a key component to later success—but evidence of the church again disappears as conflicts between the emperor and the Catholic Church come to a head.

1807 – Scotsman Robert Morrison is the first Protestant missionary to bring Christianity to China. It survives, but colonialism breeds hostility towards Western thought and Christianity.

1912 – The Republic of China formed in Nanjing, ending thousands of years of imperial dynasties

1949 – People's Republic of China formed (Communist government established); changes in the social-political order: independence and nationalism are implanted in the country. Ties established between government and church in order for church to remain active.

1950 – The Three Self Patriotic Movement announced to help ensure loyalty and make the church distinctly Chinese. Self-governance, self-support and self-propagation were the goals.

1966–1976—Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution—a spiritual shift takes place. Between 1966 and 1968, the destruction of the Four Olds (Old Custom, Old Culture, Old Habits and Old Ideas) takes place as religious and educational institutions were targeted and nuns, priests, monks, authors, professors and artists were beaten or forced to kill themselves.

1980 – China Christian Council established

1985 – post-denominationalism begins—joint worship among Christians; church unity

1998—today—Reconstruction of theological thought; endeavours to enable Chinese Christians to be fully Christian while remaining fully Chinese; adapting faith to a socialist environment.

Muslims love Christ-mass

ENI–Britain's Christian Muslim Forum has strongly criticised moves to take the religious message out of Christmas in the country on the grounds that offence might be caused to members of other faiths.

"As Muslims and Christians together we are wholeheartedly committed to the retention of specific religious recognition for Christian festivals," their statement said, "Christmas is a celebration of the birth of Jesus and we wish this significant part of the Christian heritage of the country to remain an acknowledged part of national life. The desire to secularise religious festivals is offensive to both communities.

"Those who use the fact of religious pluralism as an excuse to de-Christianize society unthinkingly become recruiting agents for the extreme right. They provoke antagonism towards Muslims and others by foisting on them an anti-Christian agenda they do not hold."

Ecumenists urge peace

ENI–An east African church grouping has joined with an inter-religious council and a leading NGO to urge religious leaders from the Horn of Africa to help avert a looming regional military confrontation in Somalia.

"We are alarmed by the escalating military confrontation in Somalia," said Rev. Fred Nyabera, executive director of the Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa.

The Christian fellowship, the Inter-Religious Council of Kenya and Christian Aid's partner in Kenya, Northern Aid, issued a joint statement in which they said, "We call upon religious leaders from the region to commit themselves to the course of peace, healing and reconciliation in Somalia and to do everything within their capacity to reduce the possibility of any military confrontation."

Social justice forum

ENI–The presence of African churches is considered urgent and important at this month's World Social Forum.

The WSF tends to meet when the World Economic Forum, seen as representing mainstream capitalism, meets in Davos, Switzerland.

"It's important for the churches to be present in all these meetings so that they can articulate their positions," Rev. Grace Kaiso, a Ugandan co-chair of the Caritas/AACC platform said. Kaiso said the groups would hone new ideas, acquire skills and network with others from around the world. "You are going to be the face of the African churches."

Un-civil Malawi synods

ENI–Two of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian synods in Malawi which are at loggerheads with one another over boundaries, have rejected offers from the country's civil society to act as arbitrators.

Turning down the offer, Nkhoma synod moderator Chatha Msangaambe told a newspaper that the church could not allow civil society to mediate in the wrangle because the matter is "ecclesiastical."

The two synods have disputed their boundaries for the past four decades. However, the issue reached boiling point earlier last year when Livingstonia synod opened a church in Lilongwe, the headquarters of Nkhoma synod. Some Livingstonia congregants argued that Nkhoma was encroaching on its territory in the north of Malawi.

Climate issue Christian

ENI–"Our Christian values are at the core of our call for urgent, concerted action on climate change. Not only do we believe that, in the beginning, we were given stewardship of the earth, but we believe that good news for the world's poor people is rooted in justice. Climate change brutally exposes humanity's failure and the failure of its institutions," a united Christian platform of Caritas Internationalis and the All Africa Conference of Churches said in a statment at the UN conference on climate change held in Nairobi in November.

The secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change said the emission of green house gas, which is responsible for global warming, showed an upward trend by 4.1 per cent between 2000 and 2004. It has resulted in increased global temperatures, rising sea levels and greater risk of heat waves.

"People can be overwhelmed by statistics, but the critical moments that have come out should be considered impetus for our action, not cause for us to be overwhelmed," said Rev. John Brinkman, a priest who focuses on religion and ecology.

• "This is not a political campaign. It is something that springs out of the Bible. We are all participants in the web of life. This is a deeply spiritual initiative," said the Anglican Bishop of London, Richard Chartres, as he led the churches' Operation Noah campaign supporters at a rally in London's Trafalgar Square in November.

In his sermon Chartres cited practical actions, such as that taken by a north London church which installed solar panels and is now contributing to the national power grid. He also announced that the (Anglican) Church of England is making a $11.27-million investment in Impax, a fund supporting alternative energy.

• In a video statment to a British church the Bishop of Bangladesh, Michael Baroi, relayed fears that if action is not taken much of his country will disappear under the sea in 40 years' time.

Immunization bond

ENI–Pope Benedict XVI and leaders of five other leading faiths in Britain have subscribed to an inaugural $1.15-billion bond issued by the British Treasury that will pay for immunizing half a billion children in developing countries over the next 10 years.

When it was launched in November, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, praised the initiative masterminded by Britain's Finance Minister, Gordon Brown. The Anglican leader noted: "By buying a bond I make a small contribution to a much bigger effort to mobilise resources to relieve poverty and suffering and build hope for a better future."

Long term binding commitments by donors will be used to borrow money directly from institutional and private investors for immediate expenditure on programs undertaken by the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization that were slated for the end of 2006 on tetanus and measles prevention.

The opinionated masses

Interested amateurs are supplanting educated experts

BY ANDREW FAIZ

"I've stayed in some pits in my time but this place really takes the biscuit. Disgusting. I don't mind shabbyness but this place was just plain dirty. And the staff have a bad attitude to boot."

That's a review of a New York City hotel I considered but didn't reserve. The review is taken from tripadvisor.com—a site where average citizens—travelers, tourists—post their opinions of hotels, resorts and other traveling necessities. It is the best—and in some ways the worst—the Internet has to offer. It is cultural democracy; where all opinions have equal weight.

But, since there is no authority to any of the opinions no one entry can be trusted. And like all democracies it is dependent on numbers: the more reviews for a particular hotel or resort, the more accurate the portrait of that institution. The hotel noted above had nearly three dozen reviews, and the overall impression, despite some defences by management and a few positive notices, was of someplace unsavoury. Of course, hotels in big cities get lots of postings; the worst hotel I ever visited, in Edfu, Egypt, has no listing.

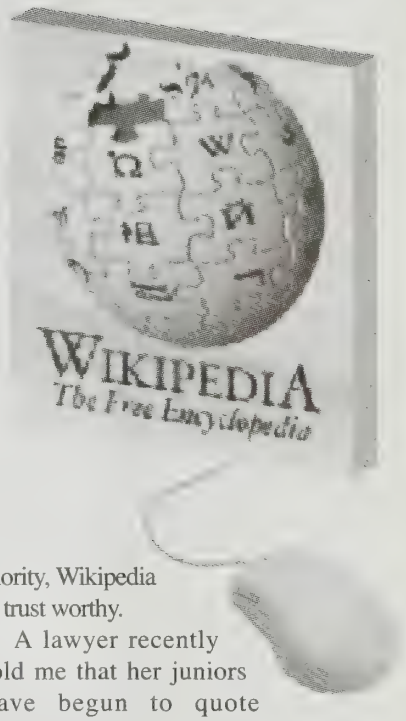
Even though Trip Advisor is filled with advertisements for hotels, resorts and booking agents, the primary draw is the unsolicited opinion. It is a site for travelers by travelers. Ratemd.com is a similar site, for patients by patients, where the sick and the infirm post reviews of their doctors. The issue is no longer of businesses being potentially impugned, but individuals.

A spokesperson for a doctors' lobby group told CBC Radio that Rate MD was merely gossip mongering. He's right of course—like Trip Adviser it is point-of-view without authority. But, he's missing the very essence of the site: the consumer has the power (if only on this one site). He's further correct because Rate MD has not yet reached a critical mass of opinions. Most of the Canadian doctors noted have only one reviewer, so there is no balance to the opinions either positive or negative. Once each entry has half a dozen or more reviews one can begin to get a fair sense of the professional. (And, all professionals are a business, that's what makes them professionals.)

Interestingly, most of the posts on Rate MD are about the doctor's bed-side manner—while doctors may be professionals they are viewed by the patients on a very personal level. Of the reviews I read, patients were more interested in whether the doctor was personable, gave their complaints and ailments due credit and if the doctor's support staff was friendly. None of the postings I read suggested the doctor was incompetent—though I understand such postings do exist on the site.

Sites like these exist across the World Wide Web, supplanting authority with opinion. Wikipedia is one: an encyclopedia not written by experts in the field. Anyone with access to the web can create an entry and can edit an entry. There is no authoritative voice on the site—the way there is in Encyclopedia Britannica, for example, where an expert in each field writes the entry.

But, again it is the power of numbers at play. The voice of a single, educated professional is replaced by that of myriad interested amateurs. Still, I understand, through no authoritative source, that the rate of Wikipedia's self-correction is almost instantaneous. (Robert Altman's death, for example, was noted on his wiki within hours of the news being released.) So, despite lacking authority, Wikipedia is trust worthy.



A lawyer recently told me that her juniors have begun to quote Wikipedia in case notes—mostly as a dictionary. About twice their age she needs the authority of Webster's or Oxford. She may find it a losing battle because the voice of many is slowly stilling the work of few.

Of course as Presbyterians we can only applaud this shift in thinking away from the single voice to the feelings of the masses. After all, our reformed tradition has been a process of unraveling the authoritative presence. Wholly accepting the educated thesis, we have none-theless slowly dismantled institutional baggage. We need no intercession to converse with Christ. Lay members can serve the sacraments. It is only a small stretch, therefore, to think that the World Wide Web could easily be referred to as a Presbyterian record.

Andrew Faiz is a writer, producer and filmmaker. He is also managing editor of the Record. You can reach him at mngeditor@presbyterianrecord.ca.

ILLUSTRATION: SAMANTHA EDWARDS



Debating the historical Christ

The Gnostic gospels are old news in a modern context

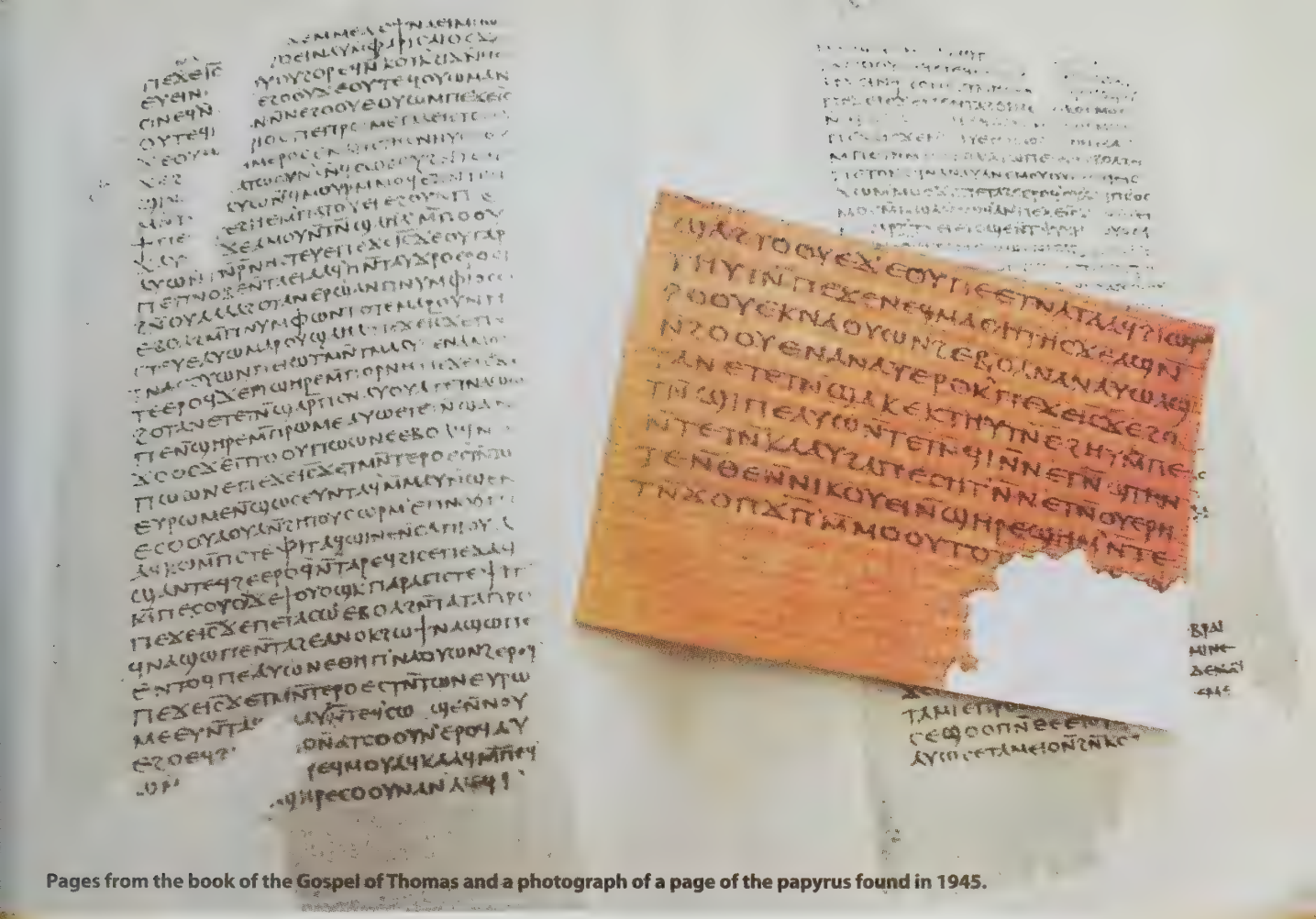
BY JOEL COPPIETERS

It is easy to blame author Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*, which has sold more than 61 million copies worldwide in 45 languages and is now the eighth-best-selling book of all time, for sparking a renewed interest in the Gnostic gospels and related texts. Instead, the novel's success can be seen as merely a symptom of a larger phenomenon, which seeks to find an alternative history of Christianity. Obscure academics and many populist authors have been pecking away at the authenticity of Christianity's roots for a very long time. Elaine Pagels has been writing about Gnostic texts for decades, and *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* laid out more than two decades ago much the same landscape that Dan Brown trod. (In fact, that book's authors sued Brown recently for fictionalizing their unsubstantiated facts.) Nikos Kazantzakis' *The Last Temptation of Christ* stated much of the same 55 years ago. The modern resurgence of Gnosticism and enduring questions about the identity of Jesus and the origins of Christianity all helped fuel the sales of Brown's novel.

And each time the debate flares, the Christian church has responded in much the same way: with apoplectic denial of Gnostic texts, calling them heresy. It is true that Brown's novel is filled with historical inaccuracies, including some modern ones. Much of these have been laid out in a steady stream of books by Christian scholars and also in the secular press. National Geographic, PBS and a host of other media outlets have featured documentaries refuting the historical details. And, yet, many Christians are once more startled to hear that their faith and the church's beliefs did not arise in the linear, straightforward way in which they have typically been portrayed. And with *The Da Vinci Code* prominently featuring texts other than the ones included in the New Testament, and *The Gospel of Judas* hitting the front page of national publications, Christians themselves feel undereducated by their own church. If there are so many gospels available, why has the church kept only four?

After Christ's departure, as the eyewitnesses of his life and ministry began to record in writing what they had seen and heard, some of them painted considerably different visions of Christ than those with which modern Christians are typically familiar. Modern Gnostics have long suggested that the early church silenced these differing perspectives by somehow engineering the disappearance of the texts that favoured other views of Christ. The movement received a strong impetus when a trove of documents discovered at Nag Hammadi, Egypt, in 1945 included several texts that seemed to give early credibility to Gnostic views about Christ and his mission.

Gnosticism is a belief system that predates Christ by about five centuries. There is much scholarly debate as to the origins and nature of Gnosticism; in today's context it is used to define



Pages from the book of the Gospel of Thomas and a photograph of a page of the papyrus found in 1945.

a broad assortment of writers, thinkers and sects who believed in a dualistic god—a flawed god, the Demiurge, who created the flawed material world and a good god, who is the father of Jesus. And human beings were categorized into three levels of a hierarchy; the highest of which was, naturally, Gnosticism, or the acquiring of gnosis, or knowledge. Salvation came through gnosis, not through forgiveness or grace.

In the aftermath of Christ's death (and resurrection) many Gnostic texts claimed themselves as Christian. But, they interpreted Jesus' life and mission through their own lens (see sidebar for a few excerpts.) Gnostic beliefs did not include the virgin birth, a divine and resurrected Jesus or that salvation comes through Christ.

(Gnostics did, however, believe that human beings were essentially evil. This had a strong effect on Saint Augustine in the development of his concept of total depravity. He in turn, influenced John Calvin.)

Gnosticism spread from the Middle East to north Africa and was an influential movement for a few centuries—so powerful, in fact, that the texts now known as Gnostic Gospels were debated for inclusion in the New Testament. For a variety of reasons, the texts that survive as our gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John would eventually be recognized as authoritative. For instance, they were written between 65 and 95, and predate the Gnostic gospels of Thomas, Peter and Mary, which were written between 110 and 150. By the time *The Gospel of Judas*, *The Gospel of Truth* and *The Secret Book of John* were written in 150, the four gospels were already beginning to gain unique acceptance.

When more than 300 bishops were convened to a meeting at Nicea at the invitation of the newly converted emperor Constantine in 325, their primary goal was to deal with questions about the nature of Christ. To what extent was he human and how much of his divinity did he keep when he walked the earth? Contrary to Dan Brown's assertion, neither this council of bishops, nor Constantine himself, nor anyone during his lifetime fixed the official accepted list of the books of the Bible.

The current list of 27 New Testament books was built very slowly. Marcion, in 140, published the first recorded list and it included only the *Gospel of Luke* and 10 of Paul's letters. Other writings in circulation were gradually accepted and by 180 Irenaeus made it a point to include the four gospels along with 13 letters of Paul, two letters of John, *Jude*, *Revelation*, *Wisdom of Solomon* and the contested *Revelation of Peter*. Though the *Book of Hebrews* was already widely read and used, Irenaeus did not include it because it was still being debated. By the time Eusebius published his list at the beginning of the fourth century, some theologians were still uncomfortable with including

PHOTO: AP PHOTO/THE PANTAGRAPH, LORI ANN COOK

James, *II Peter*, *II* and *III John*, and *Jude*. The final list of 27 books as we have them today was first reflected in a list published in 367, and finally accepted by the church councils that met at Hippo in 393 and again at Carthage in 39.

So neither the suggestions of anti-Gnostic conspiracies made by Brown's fictional experts or the picture Christians often give about an official list of canonical books being quickly and unanimously decided are accurate. As the church developed its canon and its theology, there were spirited debates and often very lively and contentious votes at the end of councils.

Dr. Peter Jones, professor of New Testament at Westminster Theological Seminary in Escondido, California, has studied and written extensively about the resurgence of Gnosticism. He co-authored *Cracking Da Vinci's Code*.

"That study of Gnosticism some 20 years ago suddenly started bouncing around in my head," says Jones. "I began studying Gnosticism at Harvard, where at the time I was doing a theology major. Copies of the recently discovered Gnostic texts were being passed around amongst the masters and doctoral students there and I was under the impression that you studied this stuff to get a better understanding of the past. How do you understand 'primitive Christianity,' as it is called, the original growth of Christianity, if you don't know the culture? Of course, Gnosticism was part of that early Christianity, so you studied it to understand. What I didn't realize was that some of those professors had really seen the discovery of these Gnostic texts as a way of transforming Christianity today."

When the Gnostic texts were discovered at Nag Hammadi in 1945, a number of scholars began studying, translating and distributing the texts. James Robinson, a former Presbyterian min-

The other christology

DURING THE RESTLESS RULE of Emperor Tiberius, a Jewish Nazarene by the name of Yeshua bar-Joseph began teaching and preaching in Palestine. He was but one of many whose messages were variously political and religious, challenging the depth of people's faith as well as prophesying the end of the Roman empire under whose yoke they laboured.

The Romans thumbed their noses at these prophecies and flattened Jerusalem.

One of the Jewish sects that survived centered around this Nazarene whose Greek name was Jesus. The era of Jesus' life and the first few centuries after his death saw a great commingling of beliefs in the Middle East. Greek and Roman philosophy mixed with Judaism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism and a host of other religions.

From among these grew a number of groups who eventually became known as Gnostics. The moniker comes from the Greek word for knowledge (*gnosis*) that frequently in Greek and other ancient Indo-European cultures refers to special, spiritual knowledge.

Central also to almost all Gnostic thought is dualism: the struggle between light and darkness, matter and spirit and, ultimately, between two divine powers.

What has come down through the ages as orthodox Christianity was often sharpened against Gnostic grist. As late as the fifth century, the great St. Augustine was a dualistic Manichee. As late as the twelfth century, another Gnostic group, the Cathars or Albigensians, became so powerful in France that a genocidal crusade against them was launched by the church for nearly 50 years followed by an Inquisition that all but wiped them out.

Still, aspects of Gnosticism persisted among the Knights Templar and eventually made their way into some Protestant sects.

In the years following Jesus' death, numerous histories of his life were written and circulated in and around the Mediterranean and Asia Minor. Many of the texts were lost or deliberately or accidentally destroyed. Some texts have been known primarily through polemical Christian references.

In 1945, a collection of 13 codices (early books) containing more than 52 texts was discovered near the town of Nag Hammadi in upper Egypt. The documents, mostly in Greek, date from the third and fourth centuries, although it is believed they are translations from first and second-century Coptic originals. Most of the letters, treatises and gospels contained in the Nag Hammadi Library are Gnostic in origin. They have helped scholars understand far better what was happening in the religious and philosophical world during this formative period in Christianity when the central doctrines of the Trinity and Jesus' humanity and divinity (Christology) were developed.

In the 1970s, another ancient codex began circulating in the world. Although its origins are uncertain, it likely also came from Egypt and dates from the same period as the Nag Hammadi codices. Written in a Coptic dialect, it contains the recently translated and published *Gospel of Judas*. Despite the flap and fury it caused in popular media, the text does not provide any new information about Jesus and his followers and its general thesis fits with other Gnostic texts from the period.

Each of these gospels name a different one of Jesus' close followers as his favourite to whom he entrusted certain secrets. And despite the institutional church's long history of involvement in politics, secrecy and subterfuge, mainstream Christianity has consistently argued that there are no theological secrets required for salvation.

The best known of the Gnostic gospels are *The Gospel of Thomas*, *The Gospel of Mary Magdalene*, *The Gospel of Philip*, *The Gospel of Sophia* and *The Gospel of Judas*. (English translations of all these books are readily available online.)



"The Incredulity of Saint Thomas" by Caravaggio.

ister, emerged as the director of the translation project. Though he grew up on the Westminster Confession in a conservative Presbyterian home and was ordained as a Presbyterian minister relatively young, he has since gone on to champion the cause of the Gnostic texts.

Jones says the "significant claim that [Robinson] made was that American New Testament scholarship had managed to break the monopoly of those backward-thinking Europeans, who held onto these Gnostic texts that had been found, and had managed to get the texts out of there, and had translated them and given them to the whole world of scholarship. But the greater achievement, having done that, was to elevate *The Gospel of Thomas* to the level of the four canonical gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. That is the contribution of American scholarship to the study of the Bible in our times, says James Robinson."

Beginning with Robinson in academic circles, and then gradually through the secular media, the Gnostic texts have been disseminated, popularized and integrated into popular belief systems. The current selection of books on store shelves now includes bright orange Idiots' guides and yellow Dummies' books on Mary Magdalene, Thomas and a host of other Gnostic texts.

But the widespread distribution of the rediscovered Gnostic texts was not the only thing that fuelled the modern resurgence. In its second-century form, the Gnostic re-unification with nature was initially a jumble of Eastern philosophies, and its modern form keeps strong links with Eastern philosophy. Jones points out that the hippies from the 60s traded illicit substances for Eastern philosophies that they had embraced—things like oneness with nature and seeking higher plains of reality through inside knowledge and illumination; philosophies that tied right into the Gnostic beliefs.

Another side of Christ

A peak into Gnostic Christianity

- The Lord would not have said "My Father who is in Heaven" unless he had had another father, but he would have said simply "My father." – *The Gospel of Philip*

- Light and Darkness, life and death, right and left, are brothers of one another. They are inseparable. Because of this neither are the good good, nor evil evil, nor is life life, nor death death. For this reason each one will dissolve into its earliest origin. But those who are exalted above the world are indissoluble, eternal. – *The Gospel of Philip*

- Now, Eve is the first virgin, the one who without a husband bore her first offspring. It is she who served as her own midwife. – *On the Origin of the World*

- He is the invisible Spirit, of whom it is not right to think of him as a god, or something similar. For he is more than a god, since there is nothing above him, for no one lords it over him. For he does not exist in something inferior to him, since everything exists in him.... He is eternal, since he exists eternally.– *The Apocryphon of John*

- Jesus said to his disciples, "Compare me to something and tell me what I am like."
Simon Peter said to him, "You are like a just messenger."
Matthew said to him, "You are like a wise philosopher."
Thomas said to him, "Teacher, my mouth is utterly unable to say what you are like."
Jesus said, "I am not your teacher. Because you have drunk, you have become intoxicated from the bubbling spring that I have tended."
And he took him, and withdrew, and spoke three sayings to him. When Thomas came back to his friends they asked him, "What did Jesus say to you?"
Thomas said to them, "If I tell you one of the sayings he spoke to me, you will pick up rocks and stone me and fire will come from the rocks and devour you."
Jesus said to them, "If you fast, you will bring sin upon yourselves, and if you pray, you will be condemned, and if you give to charity, you will harm your spirits.
When you go into any region and walk about in the countryside, when people take you in, eat what they serve you and heal the sick among them.
After all, what goes into your mouth will not defile you; rather, it's what comes out of your mouth that will defile you."
Jesus said, "When you see one who was not born of woman, fall on your faces and worship. That one is your Father."
Jesus said, "Perhaps people think that I have come to cast peace upon the world. They do not know that I have come to cast conflicts upon the Earth: fire, sword and war."
– *Gospel of Thomas*

~ Courtesy gnosis.org, the Nag Hammadi Library

Christian bookstores in the Montreal region report that while the sales of *Da Vinci*-related books geared to believers have been good, these have been dwarfed by the much brisker sales of the smaller booklets and evangelistic tracts that were obviously being distributed to the public at large. Rather than dealing with the background debates and the Gnostic controversies, both the books and the tracts tend to become academic listings of historical errors in a book that the world at large and the secular media have already understood to be intended as fiction. The church is responding to questions that nobody seems to be asking.

"The Christian church needs to be careful not to continually get sidetracked, reacting to the agenda which the media sets," cautions Dr. Richard Topping, minister at the Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul in Montreal. "The book is basically a good yarn, and I think most people see it as that. Rather than get all tense about responding to it and its historical inaccuracies, we need to get busy catechizing people."

Jones would agree. He was reticent when first asked to write a book debunking the historical claims of *The Da Vinci Code*, because to him, the book remains first and foremost a work of fiction. However, he believes the book has helped to highlight the strong and growing interest in pagan spirituality, which is what Christians should be addressing much more than the fanciful historical claims of the book.

Emerging Church leader Brian MacLaren believes the book may have served a purpose beyond highlighting the pagan undertows in our culture. In a May 2006 interview with *SOJOMAIL*, MacLaren said he thought "a lot of people have read the book, not just as a popular page-turner but also as an experience in shared frustration with status-quo, male-dominated, power-oriented, cover-up-prone organized Christian religion. We need to ask ourselves why the vision of Jesus hinted at in Dan Brown's book is more interesting, attractive and intriguing to these people than the standard vision of Jesus they hear about in church. Why would so many people be disappointed to find that Brown's version of Jesus has been largely discredited as fanciful and inaccurate, leaving only the church's conventional version? Is it possible that even though Brown's fictional version misleads in many ways, it at least serves to open up the possibility that the church's conventional version of Jesus may not do him justice?"

Whatever these differing perspectives about Jesus, there was a point when the church considered them, debated them and opted against them. Unfortunately, we have tended to overlook them and teach the historical development of Christianity as a series of motions accepted by debateless councils without opposition. We typically describe the early development of our faith as a series of resoundingly unanimous declarations and creeds gradually shaping our beliefs into what they are today. It is important not only to remember that there was debate and controversy along the way, but also to remember why a given



Why would so many people be disappointed to find that Brown's version of Jesus has been largely discredited as fanciful and inaccurate, leaving only the church's conventional version?

perspective emerged as the accepted orthodox position. This approach allows us to welcome new questions and challenges to our understanding of our faith because debate is no longer something to be feared, but the tool God has used to bring our Christian faith to the point it is today.

How peculiar that while the church complains of a lethargy and disinterest in religion and spirituality in the population at large, a work of fiction which many literary critics agree to be of dubious quality at best sweeps to the top of the bestsellers list and remains there for months because of a continued interest in Jesus and the origins of Christianity. Wouldn't it be the greatest of ironies if the current generation, intrigued and attracted by the vision of a fresh and living radical Jesus that emerges from controversy and debate, were to find Him without the church? It seems that in spite of the church-growth wisdom of the day, teaching a little more history of Christianity in the pulpit might not be such a turn-off for seekers. And who knows, it might just be good for the Christians too.

~ Joel Coppieters is a freelance writer in Quebec.

On Earth as in Heaven

There is plenty of non-Gospel evidence to prove that Jesus did exist | BY BARRY BALDWIN

Tom Harpur's attempt in *The Pagan Christ* to disprove Jesus' earthly existence is as futile as that of his many predecessors. These go back to Docetism, a heresy hinted at in 1 John 4 and 2 John 7, developed by second-century Gnostics to the point where Christ's earthly appearance was an illusion, likewise his death, being replaced on the cross by Judaas or Simon of Cyrene.

This ideological pot heated up in the 18th century, evidenced by brisk exchanges in Boswell's *Life of Johnson*. Debate sharpened with D. F. Strauss' *The Life of Jesus* (1835), then the German "sceptical school" with Rudolph Bultmann's *Jesus and the World* (1926) and his pupil Gunther Bornkamm's *Jesus of Nazareth* (1956) which dogmatized that "nobody is any further in a position to write a Life of Jesus." A major modern academic denier is G. A. Wells in *The Historical Evidence for Jesus* (1983). Two other such are Robin Lane Fox, *The Unauthorised Version* (1994), and A. N. Wilson, *Jesus* (1997).

Harpur and his kind concentrate on discrediting the Gospels as biographical sources. In fact, the Gospels can be left out of the argument. What count are the ancient non-Christian sources, enough to refute Northrop Frye (*The Great Code: The Bible as Literature*): "There is practically no real evidence for the life of Jesus outside the New Testament."

Suetonius in his life of the emperor Claudius (AD 41-54) says Jews at Rome rioted "at the instigation of Chrestus." Some maintain this does not allude to Jesus, but to a mob orator. Chrestus was indeed a common servile or ex-slave's name, meaning Mr. Useful. In this case, though, we would have expected Suetonius to say who the fellow was, at the very least to introduce him by the words "A certain..." (cf. the biblical, "One Simon, a tanner...")

Thanks to the African church father Tertullian (*Apology*, 2nd-3rd century), we know that Chrestus was a common error for Christus, due to similar pronunciation of the Greek vowels "e" and "i." On this reckoning, Suetonius both accepted Christ's existence and assumed his readers needed no more information or argument.

Suetonius was a friend of Tacitus and Pliny. The former (*Annals*), calling Christianity "a new and degraded sect" deservedly punished by Nero, had no doubts about Christ, stating matter of factly that Pontius Pilate executed him during Tiberius' reign (AD 14-37).

Tacitus based his history on sources chronologically much closer to the Crucifixion. Moreover, Pliny, during his troubles with Christians while governing Bithynia, does record (*Letters*, to the emperor Trajan) his own executions of these "pernicious sectarians;" other letters contain diverse criminal reports. But he never ridicules Christians for deludedly following a non-existent hero.

Tacitus' *Annals* are lost for the Crucifixion period. Some think this was due to Christian censorship of his offensive attitude, though they left the above-quoted insults untouched. He notably assumes Roman readers' familiarity with Pontius Pilate (a very rare name).The satirist Lucian (mid-second century) included in the 1557 edition of the Vatican's *Index of Forbidden Books*, does call Christians deluded, but for their belief in immortality, not in Christ, whom he describes (*Peregrinus*) as "their crucified leader, their first law-giver, whom they worshipped." An anonymous Byzantine satire, *The Patriot*, once falsely ascribed to Lucian, contains a comic description implying belief in an earthly Jesus of "the Galilaean with receding hair and a long nose who had acquired the most glorious knowledge, regenerating us with water, leading us into the paths of the blessed, ransoming us from the places of impiety."

Around Lucian's time, a certain Celsus penned his *True Doctrine*, the first pagan intellectual attack on Christianity. Otherwise lost, the paraphrases and quotations in Origen's refutation (*Against Celsus*) make it clear that Celsus dismissed the Gospel miracles as magic tricks that Christ had learned in Egypt.

The anonymous Augustan history *Life of Alexander Severus* says that the emperor placed a bust of Christ in his private chapel; he (a pagan) would hardly have so honoured someone whose existence was doubtful.

The scathing treatise *Against the Galilaeans* by the last pagan emperor Julian (361-363) accepts the earthly Christ without qualms, with frequent allusions to episodes in his life and ministry.

I scrupulously do not clinch the argument with the first-century Jewish historian Josephus, since his mention (*Jewish Antiquities*) of Christ as "a perhaps more than human sage" and detailed account (*Jewish Wars*) of Jesus' life and death in the Slavonic—not the Greek—text are branded by some (not all) commentators as Christian interpolations. Pending more evidence, a Scottish verdict of Not Proven is the fairest.

The overall point is, had any of these hostile sources thought there was the slightest chance of denying the fact of Christ's earthly existence, it is inconceivable that they would not have taken it. This conclusion is enhanced by the neo-platonist Porphyry's remark, quoted by Augustine from his *Philosophy from Oracles,* that opponents preferred to attack Christianity rather than Christ himself.

~ Barry Baldwin is a regular contributor to the Record.

Debating the virgin birth

If you pick and choose the Gospels, you believe only in yourself

BY CALVIN BROWN

It is interesting to reflect that faithful followers of both Islam and Christianity can confess that according to their scriptures Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary. But at that point their theology diverges. Orthodox Christians believe that the virgin birth, which is confessed in all the historic and widely used creeds, is a clear declaration that Jesus is not only Son of Man but Son of God—that Jesus has co-existing natures and that it is accurate to say he is truly human and at the same time truly God. Christians do not believe he is half God and half man, but as *Living Faith* tries to explain it: "God's nature is expressed in Jesus, the very Word of God ... Jesus Christ is Lord. He is one with the Father and the Holy Spirit."

In other words, he is truly God and is the third person in the Godhead along with the Father and the Holy Spirit (who overshadowed Mary at the time of the conception of Jesus in Mary's womb). Some liberal Christians, who deny the virgin birth of Jesus in any realistic sense, draw a lesser conclusion, saying the story of the virgin birth is evidence only that Jesus is chosen by God for an important prophetic role and that he is not God. Oddly, Islam, which affirms the virgin birth, still does not affirm Jesus' claims to be more than a prophet.

The issue of the virgin birth has always been a challenge to faith and reason, because it separates those who believe in a God of miracles and those who believe God is captive to His original creation. I remember as a boy of about nine or 10 years old visiting my friend's house around Christmastime and somehow the conversation with his father turned to the reality of the virgin birth, which I as a good Presbyterian declared must be believed by Christians. I argued that if God were all-powerful (a point he was willing to concede) then He who made all things, including the womb, could fertilize the egg in a miraculous way. Somewhere I had crossed the line of possibility with him and he again simply affirmed his conviction that it couldn't ever happen—not even God could do that!

But does it really matter if you believe that Jesus was really born of the virgin Mary? Why do the creeds (including *Living Faith*) insist on it as an essential part of basic faith?

Why can't people believe it, or not, so long as they believe the rest of the account of Jesus' life and teaching?

The difficulty with not accepting this story of the virgin birth is that it undermines the whole authority of scripture. Scripture becomes merely a smorgasbord of theological and ethical teaching from which we pick what we like. As St. Augustine once said, "If you believe what you like in the Gospel, and reject what you like—it is not the Gospel you believe, but yourselves."

If we do not believe in the Christmas story, including the virgin birth, then we have no good reason to believe Jesus is really God. And if Jesus is not God then he cannot forgive sins. Only God has authority to forgive sins, and if Jesus is not God, then all he says about taking upon himself the sin of the world is foolishness and there is no gospel. There can be no force to the claim that God so loved the world that he gave His one and only begotten Son so that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life. The story of the virgin birth is an incredible story. I don't believe, as some claim, that it was borrowed from neighbouring pagan religions with their demi-God mythologies, and it was of no significance to the gospel writers and early church fathers who affirmed the absolute necessity of believing the story. It is a story that keeps reminding us that Jesus is both God, who has the power to forgive sins, and man, who has the experience to know the power of temptations.

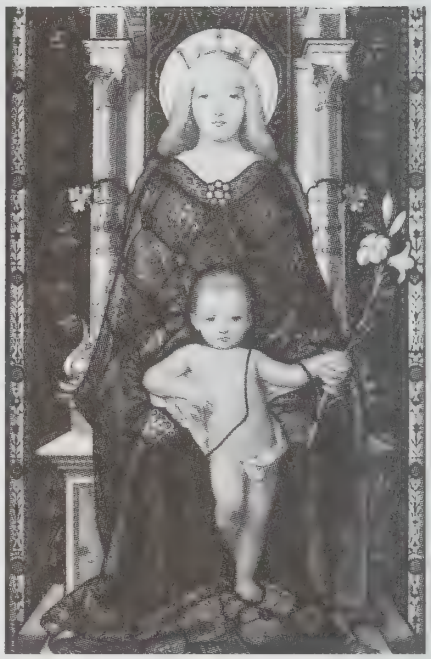


PHOTO: ©ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/JOHAN RAMBERG

It is a story that keeps reminding us that Jesus is both God, who has the power to forgive sins, and man, who has the experience to know the power of temptations

Calvin Brown is the editor of The Renewal Fellowship within The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

A light for future generations

An innovative fund in British Columbia helps developing ministries

BY DAVID JENNINGS

In Presbyterian communities, a 50th birthday celebration is not a sign of old age—in some congregations the recipients of such well wishes still constitute the "young people!" Likewise, when the British Columbia Presbyterian Extension Fund celebrates its 50th birthday this month, it will be doing so thinking of itself as a young organization more concerned with its strong future than its past acts.

But those past acts should not be forgotten. On January 18, 1957, the Presbyterian Extension Fund was incorporated, with the Presbyteries of Westminster, Kamloops, Kootenay and Vancouver Island being its shareholders. Since that time the PEF has assisted a long list of B.C. congregations in church growth and extension. The funds were raised from individual Presbyterians to be used to back guarantees for banks that were nervous to lend to small, new congregations. This effort preceded, by over a decade, the creation of the Presbyterian Church Building Corporation, which today plays a similar role throughout all of Canada.

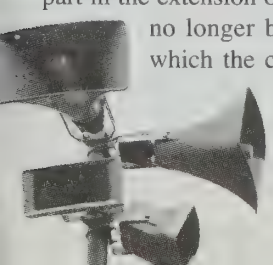


Innovative Presbyterians: Jean Lawrence (secretary) Andy Whitelaw, (chair), Nancy Farran (Conference chair), Rev. Richard Moffat (director) and Strachan Birnie (treasurer).

Those people who incorporated and built up the fund had a vision: to see The Presbyterian Church in Canada extended throughout British Columbia. The fund continues to honour that vision. Today, however, it appears that church growth and extension may have less to do with bricks and mortar than with innovative ways to provide ministry to a lost and suffering world. While sanctuaries will always have an important part in the extension of our church's ministry, sanctuaries can no longer be expected to be the only method by which the church's influence in this world can be extended. In addition to four walls and a roof, the world needs to see five loaves and two fishes.

In order to accomplish this mandate, 10 years ago the fund took steps to create Presbyterian Innovative Ministries. The fund was fortunate to be able to draw on the experience and expertise of the Experimental Fund in setting up this new funding ministry. So what does it do? Interest earned on the capital assets of PEF (which are valued at about $1.6 million today) is given to PIM. Those funds are then distributed by loan or grant to various innovative ministries in British Columbia to support the growth and extension of the ministry of the PCC throughout the province.

The first grant of $45,000 was awarded in 1999 to buy a new diesel truck for the Cariboo Home Church Ministry, well-known to readers of the *Record*. Since that time, a total of almost $325,000 has been given to fulfill worthwhile innovative min-





Rev. Herb Gale, associate secretary for Planned Giving at church offices (centre) spoke at PIM's synod-wide conference. He is sandwiched by Woldy Sosnowsky to his left, and Nancy Farran on his right

istry in British Columbia. Projects funded include parish nurses, a go-cart racing youth program, Elders' Institute courses, Korean cultural and religious programs for the elderly, video production and distribution, a downtown church outreach program, a feasibility study for a potential church plant, and many, many others.

Most recently, PIM hosted and subsidized in May 2006 a B.C.-wide conference entitled "The Future That Has Come in Richmond." Four representatives from each congregation in the province were invited to attend a two-day conference looking at innovative ministry opportunities in the province, led by Dr. Kennon L. Callahan and Herb Gale. About 160 Presbyterians gathered to consider how the church could be a positive influence in a world that has changed dramatically since those first donors in 1957 set up the Presbyterian Extension Fund. But our goal is the same as always—to share the Good News of Jesus Christ in our communities. The impact of this conference, which cost about $65,000 to host, will not be known for years, but early feedback has been greatly encouraging. Presbyterians, given knowledge and funding, can do wonderful things for the growth of the church, as defined in a broad and new exciting way.

So what will happen in the next 50 years of Presbyterian Extension Fund? Given its strong financial backing, it will be able to guarantee the loans needed to create and develop new congregational buildings throughout British Columbia. But the fund needs to do what it can to make sure that those Christian communities exist and thrive in a complex and uncertain future. That is why it is investing heavily in innovative ministry that can effectively reach out to a new generation with the saving message of the grace and peace of our Lord. That is why the fund would rather skimp on this year's birthday candles and splurge for the Light of all generations. – *David Jennings is the president of Presbyterian Extension Fund (B.C.) Ltd.*

INNOVATIVE PRESBYTERIANS

What is an innovative Presbyterian? This is what we were looking to find out when the good people at PIM decided to hold a synod-wide conference.

That's where Dr. Kennon Callahan came into the picture. Well-regarded and known for his work on stewardship and church growth, he wrote a book called *The Future That Has Come*. This was the foundation of the conference attended by 178 fine B. C. Presbyterians.

So what was the message? What can be summed up as innovation going forward? Here are a few quotes and notes:

"Healthy congregations encourage people to make sense of life in the whole of God's universe and on this planet."

"People join a family, not an organization. People join a community, not a committee. People join a congregation, not a denomination. People join a movement, not an institution. People join mission."

A big theme of Dr. Callahan's is that we need to think like sprinters, not marathoners. Dying congregations focus on long-term commitments. We need to relearn culture. Think of how you are with your grandchildren if you have them—they are lots of fun in smaller doses. A good sprint. Sprinter cultures create more leaders, volunteers, participants and lead to excellent results and generosity.

A strong healthy church will have, in a year, eight one-time, six seasonal, four short-term and two long-term events as well as one year round event. People's attention spans are held rapt this way.

His summary is simple. There are seven paradigm shifts that have occurred:

Institution	has become	Movement
Commitment	has become	Compassion
Planet	has become	Stars
Marathon	has become	Sprinter
Maintenance	has become	Mission
Controlling	has become	Creativity
Parts	have become	Whole

All we need to do is pick three of the above and do them well.

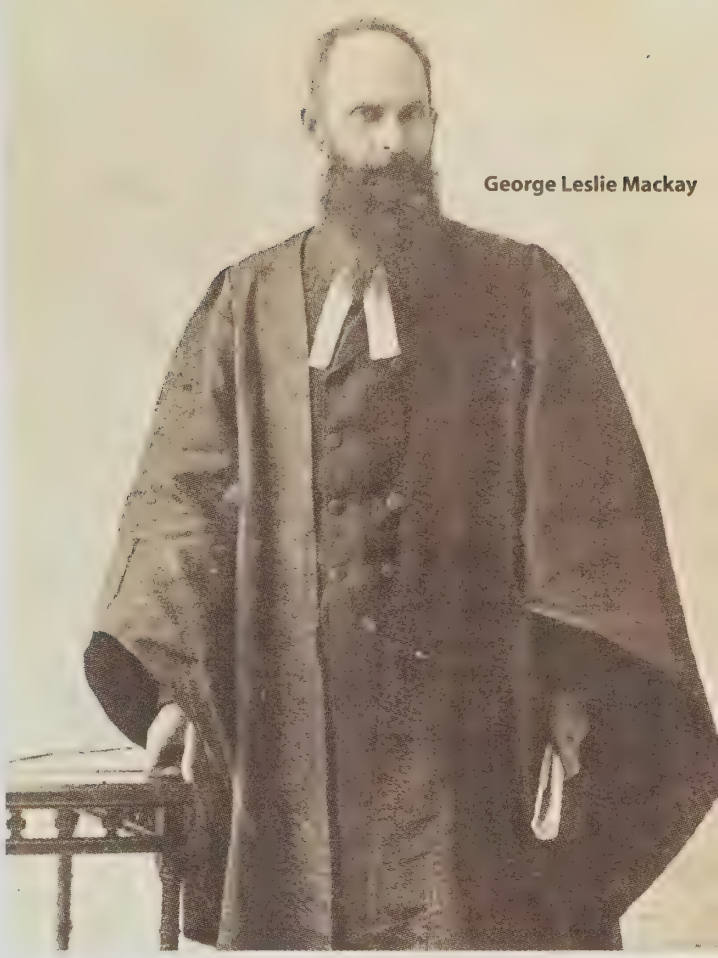
It sounds simple. Now, the only thing we have to do next is live it!

— Nancy Farran, conference chair

Relieving human misery

George Leslie Mackay set the tone for progressive missions

BY MICHAEL STAINTON



George Leslie Mackay

Tuesday June 19, 1894. The 20th General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, meeting in St. John, New Brunswick:

> There was taken up and read an overture signed by a large number of members of the Assembly, asking the Assembly to take into serious consideration the unjust and odious discrimination against the Government and people of China, and in conjunction with other churches to endeavor to bring such influence to bear upon the government of Canada, as may result in the removal of the aforesaid unjust restriction. The Moderator was heard in support of the overture, the ex-moderator taking the chair to enable him to speak.

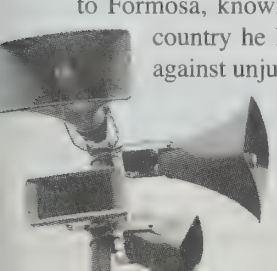
The moderator who broke with tradition was George Leslie Mackay. The overture was his work. His unusual act of leaving the moderator's chair to join the debate typifies this passionate man who never let conventionality stand in the way of doing good. The speech he made is reported in the *Toronto Globe* (June 20, 1894):

> Dr. Cochrane read the overtures re: Chinese emigration. These overtures set forth that Canada ought to welcome people from all countries to develop her resources; that it is contrary to righteousness, to international comity, and to British practices and treaties to so discriminate. Moderator Mackay spoke most eloquently, upholding the cause of the Chinese, and condemning the course adopted in placing restrictions upon them. "It was said here that the Chinese work cheaply, they retained their own food habits and customs, they returned home after they made money in this country, and they were grossly immoral." He would like to hear of any charge raised against the Chinese here, including the immorality, which charge was not made by the Chinese in their own country against the European residents there, and upon good grounds. He said he held that in Canada and the United States it is high time that the people remove the scales of prejudice and national pride from their eyes. He would feel proud to go back to Formosa, knowing that the church he loved in the country he loved had placed itself on record as against unjust restrictions against the Chinese.

There were no opposing voices heard in the Assembly, though *The Presbyterian Record* (July 1894) reported that "Some think the question to be purely one of expediency for the regulating of immigration, a matter concerning which the church has no call to approach the government, but nothing was said against the resolution and it was adopted." This resolution was the first time that the Presbyterians, or any other church in Canada, had spoken to political issues other than traditional moral issues such as temperance. Mackay challenged the widespread assumption of Canadian society about the danger posed to Canada by the "yellow peril." Through Mackay's urging, the Presbyterian Church took a public anti-racist position and voted to send a delegation to lobby the government on immigration policy. It was one of Mackay's greatest achievements, one which deserves greater notice in Canada's history, and in the memory of the church.

In his lifetime, Mackay was famed for the strong principles of justice and equality by which he treated others. No better example can be found than his controversial marriage to a "Chinese lady," 張聰明, in 1877. Responding to his Canadian critics he wrote: "As I from my heart believe that Chinese and Canadians are exactly the same in the presence of our Lord I act accordingly."

Mackay's public opposition to the head tax began when it was still only a British Columbia law. At the large public meeting held October 13, 1881, in Woodstock, Ontario, before his return to Taiwan, Mackay said there was one more subject to




Minnie Mackay

which he wished to refer before leaving Canada. He was no politician, but the morality and justice of his native land were dear to him. He referred to the immigration of the Chinese to British Columbia and the attempts that were being made there and at Ottawa to exclude them by unequal and unjust laws. With impressive and thrilling eloquence he denounced the course of their enemies, and appealed—in a way that electrified the whole audience—to Canadians, to crush the monster Tyranny that was now daring to show its head; and speak out in behalf of liberty and fair play to all. Alluding to the grand resources and glorious future of Canada, he would never believe that she would harbour such tyranny or strangle the liberty she now enjoyed. He appealed to his fellow countrymen, who could go freely to China, to stand up for liberty and morality and try to elevate and Christianize all. (*The Sentinel Review*, Woodstock, October 14, 1881)

I have not yet found any statements by Canadian public figures, or editorials in the papers of his day, that expressed opinions like Mackay's. He appears to have been prophetically alone in his principles and passionate opposition to the head tax. Four years later, in July 1885, to please the strongly anti-Chinese labour vote in British Columbia, the Macdonald government passed the Chinese Immigration Act. It imposed the first head tax, $50 or about a month's wage for a worker. This was done as a matter of political convenience to keep the peace in B.C. And it was passed with support from all parties in the Parliament. This, despite the favourable evaluation on Chinese immigration presented by the Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration:

> CHINESE IMMIGRATION
> Sir John's Commission Presents its Report
> STRONGLY FAVOURING THE HEATHEN
> John Chinaman Quite as Moral as his Neighbours
> AND A MORE SERVICEABLE CITIZEN
> His Continued Immigration a Most Desirable Thing
> (*Toronto Globe,* February 25, 1885)

In 1893, Mackay returned to Canada with Minnie (her Taiwanese name 聰明羽 means "intelligent," "clever." Minnie is the affectionate form of Minerva, the goddess of wisdom.) With them were his children and his favourite student, and future son-in-law, Koa Kau (柯玖). Their experience getting off the boat in Victoria renewed Mackay's passionate opposition to the injustice of the 1885 Head Tax. In a full-page report on Mackay's return to Canada, titled A Noted Missionary, the *Toronto Globe* (December 9, 1893) reported:

> The pleasure of his present visit to Canada was marred somewhat by the poll tax of $50 collected upon Dr. Mackay's Chinese student by the collector of customs at Vancouver. The money has since been refunded, but not before Dr. Mackay had recorded his uncompromising opposition to all restrictive legislation against the Chinese. He holds it to be anti-progressive, and anti-commercial, and anti-Christian. His recent address upon the question in the town hall here was a remarkable, urgent and convincing effort.

Remembering George Leslie Mackay and his opposition to the head tax offers us a new understanding of the important missionary heritage in Canada's past; a history which has been lost from our collective memory.

At a large missionary meeting in Montreal in 1881, Mackay did not fear to criticize his own church. "Many of the churches were dead. Even in this great, wealthy and highly favoured city of Montreal there were dead churches. Too much money by far had been expended upon church edifices, and too many congregations were as a consequence carrying a load of debt, which they found to be an intolerable burden. The system is wrong, it is wicked, and its effect upon the mission of the church is disastrous."

Mackay had a vigorous and progressive vision of Christian mission, which he actively lived out, often despite the more conventional views of the Presbyterian Board of Missions. A letter from Formosa, May 8, 1876, is one of many in which Mackay defends his practice of breaking the missionary mould:

> Perhaps some dear aged Christian in Canada will say, "Extracting teeth is not preaching the Gospel." I reply, it is! It is relieving human misery, and thus it is "doing good." I recognize only Christ Jesus as my master; so that if I can in some humble means endeavour to follow His steps who went about "healing all manner of diseases," I will rejoice and care little about the world and its judgment.

The Presbyterian Church of his day did care about the world and its judgments, so Mackay's prophetic efforts got no further than the 1894 General Assembly. The delegation was never sent. In 1895 Mackay returned to Taiwan and the resolution was quietly forgotten. In 1905 the Liberal Laurier government raised the head tax to a prohibitive $500, and in 1923 the Liberal Mackenzie King government barred all Chinese immigration. Now the Conservative Harper government has made an apology and compensation to Chinese Canadians. Surely George Leslie would have some thoughts on how his prophetic words waited over a century to be vindicated. And what would he say to our church today? – *Rev. Michael Stainton is with York University's Centre for Asian Research.*

A life-giving fluid

A conference in a rural town focused on the importance of water

BY RON ARCHER

If you are around long enough, you will always get one, and the village of Grand Valley has been around more than long enough to have earned a considerable one. Once you get it, it is often hard to shake. It sticks like epoxy to a broken hoe and hardens like Cambrian rock once the glue dries. Most folks simply call it a reputation and it is as visible as a multi-coloured tattoo on your bicep and as permanent as a bronze plaque in a rural church sanctuary.

Grand Valley, Ont., has long held the reputation of being a farming village and the image is not undeserved. Any amateur historian could collect a tractor load of evidence, past or present, and clearly make the case that this place is agrarian to the core. Younger people, with an eye to statistics or an ear to CBC, make the contrasting claim that this village is no longer the place of harvesting and planting but is instead the locus of brash SUVs or kilometre-conscious mini cars—a commuting community where people sleep only long enough to regain their strength before heading south to the big city where their souls are captured by commerce.

As a newcomer to The Valley, I see where they are coming from and understand how they would identify with their particular version of our rural reputation. However, as an "incomer" to this beautiful country setting, I still have the impolite ability to call a spade a spade, so I don't subscribe to the local wisdom espoused by either side. The soul of this village is found neither in the bright green combines that scoop up the crops nor in the flashy leased commuter cars that shuttle the urban workers. The core of this village is liquid. The Grand River, which snakes through our entire village and surrounds our fertile farms, is the true tattoo of our identity. We are a "water community."

With that much older reputation in mind, I piggy-backed onto the very contemporary challenge of mainline denominations, to examine the role of water in our community and to see what our Christian and biblical tradition had to say about the fluid from which all life flows. Believing that outsiders often see things more clearly than insiders, I invited a team of six water-loving, faith-finding, truth-seeking people to come to The Valley and tell us their water stories. All this—in the hope that God would show us who we really are and what we really look like when we see our faces reflected in the still waters of the Grand River.

They call this region the Headwaters and rightly so because there are no fewer than five rivers which have their source in our immediate counties and these five sources eventually feed into three of Canada's Great Lakes. The implications are of such magnitude, it is no wonder we have a reputation. Our waters feed and sustain a village, a province, and a good part of a nation. To help us see ourselves more clearly, six guest speakers agreed to come to the Valley and share their unique perspectives on our local reputation.

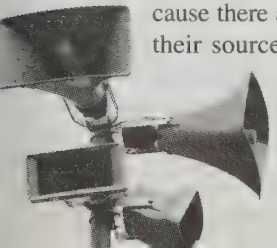
The community forum was ecumenical—hosted by five different congregations. I was the first to speak, being a local minster to Knox Presbyterian and Trinity United churches. I presented a biblical and philosophical perspective on water that simply said: water is neither a commodity for sale nor a resource for trade. Instead, it is a gift from God—to the land, to the animals and to the people. It is therefore a common trust that deserves to be shared equally with the stakeholders.

Paul General, the manager of the Ecology Centre for the Six Nations, was the next week's speaker and his presentation on Aboriginal Water and Land Rights was a most powerful and poignant presentation that underscored the sacred nature of water and the need to protect what is God-given. He shocked most listeners by reminding us that much of the land and most of the water actually do not belong to us. Instead, they are both claimed through ancient treaties, to be co-owned by the Six Nations and those who settled the land after them. It was a chilling pre-Caledonian presentation that raised countless questions.

In week three we were visited by a genuine Canadian hero, Dr. Kristen Hallett. She is the young and brilliant pediatrician from Owen Sound who diagnosed *e.coli* as the culprit in the Walkerton tragedy. Kristen, through the stories of children and parents, opened us up to the fragility of medical systems, the carelessness of municipal oversight, and the pressure of local politics. With humour, insight, tears and warmth, Kristen guided us through the nightmare of any small rural settlement which tries to balance the conflicting needs of modern agriculture and economic imperatives.

Our fourth visitor was Peter Miasek, the senior environmental advisor for Imperial Oil. Peter is a rare combination of brilliant scientist, faithful Christian, technical advisor and stand-up comedian. He helped us to see all of Canada as a nation of water and to examine the challenges that belong to our nation. His Brief World History of Water was both fascinating and funny. As both a scientist and conservationist, he underlined the stupidity of civilizations that started to use water as a disposal method for human wastes and continue the practice up to this very day. Those beautiful Roman aqueducts? Do you know why they were essential to the Roman Empire?

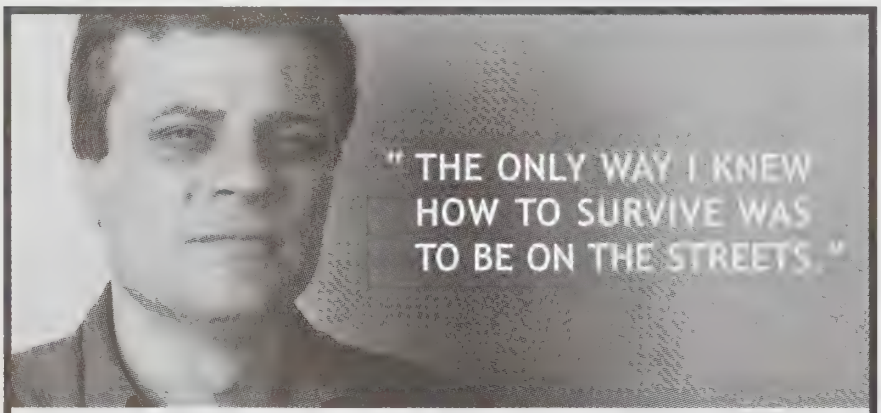
Elaine Towe was part of a father/daughter act and she proved herself to be as insightful and competent as her dad,



Peter. As a key person in the technical support services of Zenon Environmental Inc. (now part of GE Water & Process Technologies), she led us through the latest of modern technologies that are used to improve the quality of Canadian drinking water. Her explanation of "membrane technology" helped us see that remediation is not only possible but essential. She could easily produce a new book called *Water Technology for Dummies* and we would all line up to buy it. She took the most complicated and sophisticated water technologies and explained them in terms we could all understand.

In our sixth and final week, Bob Duncanson (executive director of the Headwaters Institute) shepherded us through the deepest of waters. He named political will and citizen involvement as the only possible solution to the increasing problems we shall face in our efforts to preserve clean water. He didn't rant or rave but instead, he echoed the challenge of Peter Miasek to get educated on the issues and get involved in the solutions. He put the ball back into our court—the local village we love.

Ever since the community forum, I take a bit of time each day to walk down to the Grand River or perhaps ride my bike to the river bridge by Knox. I watch the water. I listen to its ripples. I fear for its life. From the road nearby or the sky above, my river looks bright and sparkling but if you go up close—real close—you will see she is pockmarked with countless white, sudsy, bubbles. There are more telltale signs of concern below the surface. My river now looks to me like a young and beautiful country bride—still filled with youthful beauty and bounce—but there are signs of abuse. Yet she is too proud to speak of the abuse; too ashamed to admit that a loved one is beating her; too hurt to give voice to the pain behind her closed doors. Lots of people don't even notice the sorrow in her flowing movements but over time they will and when they do see her clearly they will see she has gained a new reputation. It is not the reputation we want for our beloved village. It is not the reputation our river deserves. – *Rev. Ron Archer serves both Presbyterian and United churches in Grand Valley, Ont.*



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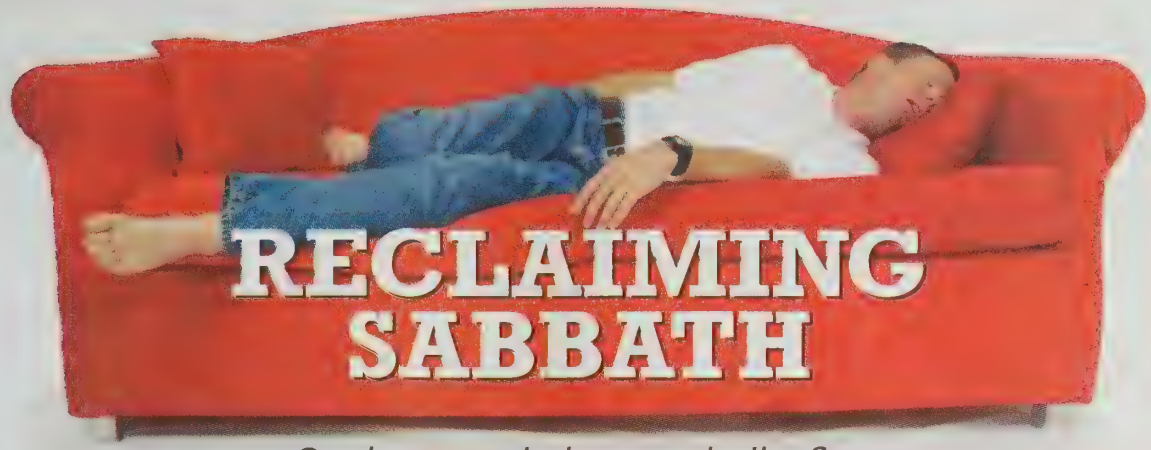
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RECLAIMING SABBATH

On the seventh day you shall reflect

BY GWYNETH J. WHILSMITH

What *is* the Sabbath? Who is it? Why is it? When, how and where is it? These days, many books and studies try to find the answers.

Well, we know who gave the Sabbath, and what it was—the gift of a day to worship and rest from work. Not that work isn't good. In fact, it seems six days of it are just fine with God, but a time of rest to renew, refresh and worship is important to Him too.

It's the when, how and where to observe Sabbath that gets complicated in our 24/7 and Open Sunday society.

It wasn't always so. When people get together, it's not unusual to talk about former times and recently, for me, the topic turns to the Sundays of our youth. No singing except for hymns, absolutely no whistling, no playing cards or ball or any other game that was fun, no polishing our shoes. (If we forgot to do it on Saturday, we went to Sunday School with dirty shoes.) No cooking—the food was prepared on Saturday.

If your family owned a summer cottage, swimming was probably prohibited on Sundays, as shopping certainly was. Because I was raised on a farm, the animals were fed and milked before church, but my sainted father would rather have been hung from a tree than do any cultivating or sowing. He owned a threshing outfit and hired a crew to harvest all the grain in the area, but never, never, no matter what the weather, did he ever suggest his men go into the fields on Sunday. They may not have attended church, but after six arduous days of harvesting, it was their day of rest.

The Jewish Sabbath fell on the last day of the week. Early Christians, perhaps wanting to distance themselves from Jewish legalism, adopted the first day of the week, the day of Christ's resurrection, and celebrated it as the Lord's Day. In time, the two names became synonymous.

Perhaps in their zeal to keep the Sabbath holy, our ancestors with their long list of do-nots took the joy out of what should be the most festive day of the week, celebrating the risen Christ. Nevertheless, we must credit them for at least setting aside Sunday for worship and rest.

Today, that's not possible for many—police, firefighters, health-care workers, to name only a few—because the rest of us would consider it not only inconvenient but dangerous if they all walked off the job every Sunday. Unions and labour laws have set the work week at 40 hours but many workers bring home their laptops and cellphones to work longer and harder than my generation ever did. On days off, parents rush their children from activity to activity or shop and cook to fill the freezer with food for the next week while still trying to catch up on all the odd jobs. Who can blame them if, when they have an hour or so off, they go to the golf course to quiet their jangled nerves? And what about ministers who must work every Sunday? When is their Sabbath?

Two authors believe they have some answers. Lynn M. Baab (*Sabbath Keeping*, InterVarsity Press) says that everyone, where possible, needs a full day for Sabbath, but not necessarily on Sunday. A day for meditation and reading, but also a time for enjoying friends, listening to music, walking or taking in other activities that relax and bring you closer to God.

And while author Wayne Muller (*Sabbath*, Bantam Books) would not disagree with her, he strongly believes we can experience Sabbath times or even Sabbath moments any day of the week, any place in the world. That is probably true, but those quiet Sundays of the past when everyone stopped work to attend church had a calming, ritualistic quality missing today.

However, last summer, after reading Muller's book, I was much more aware of the Sabbath times I spent on my back porch, absorbing nature's beauty, enjoying a good book or chatting with friends over a leisurely lunch—times of grace blessed by God.

A few years ago, experts assured us that computers and other mind-dazzling devices would provide us with so much leisure time that we'd have to take courses to learn how to use







Scenes of Sabbath taking by members of Burns Presbyterian, Georgetown, Guyana, courtesy of Rev. Ken Stright.

it! But instead of increasing society's leisure time, these wonderful machines have proved to be work makers and slave drivers. There's less leisure time now because many people find it impossible to step off the treadmill of earning and spending. The Jews commence their Sabbath at sundown on Friday, not when they've finished work. Many Christians, on the other hand, can't stop work because it's never finished.

Earning and spending has a great deal to do with what happened to our Sunday Sabbaths. Productivity rules the lives of working people. Constant advertising brainwashes us until our needs, or at least our wants, far exceed what past generations expected when one car in the garage of a modest home with one bathroom for the whole family was enough. Now gargantuan houses line the streets with a bathroom for each bedroom and two or three cars in the garage. And even though many households have two wage earners with a lot more money to spend, they are often too tired to enjoy the benefits.

If all this made a society that was happier and more content it might make some sense. But common knowledge tells us it doesn't and that depression is more prevalent than ever. So despite all our busyness and keeping up the Gross Domestic Product, we don't seem to find fulfillment in our lives. Perhaps change is coming. Recently, a radio news item reported several companies organizing a spirituality or meditation hour for their employees, the idea being the workers would be even more productive if they had some down time in the middle of their day at the office. For some, this might be considered a Sabbath time.

Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath, has the last word. When he healed on the holy day and allowed his hungry disciples to pluck grain to feed themselves, he said the Sabbath was made for humanity and not the other way around. His views left his legalistic adversaries speechless but angry enough to kill him even though He never suggested that the Sabbath be annulled. We know he worshipped in the synagogue and in the temple on the Sabbath.

God, who is surely wiser, gave us the gift of the Sabbath for spiritual and humanitarian betterment and instructed us to keep it holy. But what is holy? Jesus' actions and words seem to define holy as what honours God and benefits our brothers and sisters. It seems to me in this chaotic 21st century, honouring and enjoying God and our neighbours hold more importance than ever.

We need to seek God's wisdom in the keeping of our Sabbaths so that we have time to worship Him (whatever the day), do His work by aiding our brothers and sisters at home and around the world and by celebrating Him in our hours of rest and recreation.

Gwyneth J. Whilsmith is a contributing editor to the *Record*.



SABBATH MEDITATIONS

"Sabbath is a time of realizing that we do not run the world. It is a time to recover the rhythms of Grace, as we trust in God the Creator. It is a time to realize our responsibilities to the poor and the lost as we look around us. We recommend a Sabbath rest for the people of God.

Recommendation 25: That the leadership in every area of church life institute the discipline of a period of retreat, rest and reflection to allow space for God to change us."

– *Church Without Walls*, Church of Scotland

Six days you shall be a workaholic; on the seventh day shall you join the peaceful company of human beings.

Six days shall you take orders from your boss; on the seventh day shall you be master of your own life.

Six days shall you toil in the marketplace; on the seventh day shall you detach yourself from money matters.

Six days shall you create, drive, create, drive, invent, push, drive; on the seventh day shall you reflect.

Six days shall you be a success; on the seventh day shall you remember that not everything is in your power.

Six days shall you enjoy the blessings of work; on the seventh day shall you understand that being is as important as doing.

– *How to Run a Jewish Household* by Blu Greenberg

These meditations courtesy of Rev. Ken Stright.



PAUSE PRAY PLAY

The Year Of Sabbath Preparation

Exodus 20:8-11 – Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work. But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and consecrated it.

Imagine a negotiation between Labour and Management. The final touches are being put to the agreement, but there is still a sticking point—and the whole agreement may collapse unless it can be resolved.

The issue? Time off. The twist?

Management is demanding that Labour take off at least one day in seven for rest and recreation and restoring body and soul. Labour doesn't like being dictated to and is balking ... but Management (God) stands firm. "You need this to be everything I want you to be, everything which you have the potential to become. This is non-negotiable. And this doesn't apply to you alone—every aspect of the economic order has to fall in line—from the highest to the lowest, from those outside these negotiations (the aliens) even down to the livestock and beasts of burden—no exceptions!"

And they would not...

Prayer: Lord, help us to love You in order to better serve You. Help us to worship You in order to better obey You. Help us to adore You in order to better follow You. Faithful discipleship begins in love, worship and adoration. Bend our lives to Your will, allure us, entice us, draw us to Yourself. Then we shall be truly free. Amen.

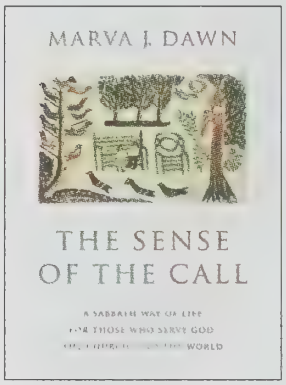
– *Ken Stright, PCC Talk*

God's Kingdom reclaims us

A challenging book could set us on a hopeful path

BY ARTHUR VAN SETERS

The Sense of the Call: A Sabbath Way of Life for Those Who Serve God, the Church and the World
By Marva J. Dawn
Eerdmans, Grand Rapids



Last summer when I heard Marva Dawn preach in Toronto, I saw a frail human being—physically. But there was nothing frail about her reading of Scripture and her preaching. The biblical text leapt off the page and inspired a kind of gospel-fuelled courage to be the church. Humbly she invited us do two things: face our own sinfulness and open ourselves to God's remarkable, enabling grace.

Dawn has a profound sense of call, not only for herself but also for the church which, in so many ways, has a frailty not always acknowledged. In order to assist congregations, pastors and other church leaders to be renewed and encouraged, Dawn begins this thoughtful book with a two-pronged strategy: an analysis of the world around us and a focused attention on our true calling.

The Sense of the Call begins with how the world hems us in and saps our morale so that the church becomes entangled and confused about its distinctive role and too easily accommodates itself to a consumer and entertainment culture. At a deeper level, she points out that our culture is unable "to digest wholesome dogma." The world around us has largely lost any notion that there is a truth larger than one's own perceptions and self-interest. This, in turn, undermines ethical awareness, leads to polarizing rhetoric and, finally, to a disrespect for the common good. Eventually we also lose an awareness of purpose and meaning. Morality becomes utilitarian (do what's useful for us) and an expression of each person's individual will.

What we need is a renewed conviction that we are called by God to be the church. Or, to cite the subtitle, we need to recover a Sabbath way of life. What this means is not at first obvious since for many the phrase sounds anachronistic, perhaps even a bit negative. But for Dawn, it begins to open up a way of life that is alternative to the world, a way that is guided by a profound understanding of God's presence, and filled with hope and promise.

The world around us has largely lost any notion that there is a truth larger than one's own perceptions and self-interest.

This is to say that Dawn roots the church and its leadership in theology, in what we believe. After an inspiring examination of 2 Timothy 4, she concludes that a sense of call arises from awareness that "God's Kingdom reclaims us, revitalizes us and renews us." The rest of the book is an exposition on just how this conviction is to be grasped and lived. It implies Sabbath-keeping because the fundamental notion of Sabbath is stopping what we are doing and pondering who God is and how Jesus Christ guides and sustains his body, the church. The reign of God, she says, points to the fact that what is central in Christ's teaching is not God's love but God's rule—which implies that God is operative in the world now! Under the mundane there is a deeper reality and order of meaning.

All too often we in the church move toward self-help, our responsibilities, our programs and energies, and then wonder why we feel overburdened, depleted and discouraged. We count numbers, create better advertising, develop new ways of raising money and invest in the latest techniques. Dawn guides us to focus rather on what God enables and blesses. We may be filling our time with our actions instead of paying attention to God's. Gradually we begin to see that we are part of something much larger, namely, the reign of God inaugurated by Christ and energized by the Spirit.

This volume combines both serious thought and practical suggestions. I wished at times that she did not refer so often in footnotes to her own previously published books, many of which are helpfully listed in her extensive bibliography. I also wondered why she needed to draw as much attention to her own medical journey, though some of this often provided

Continued on page 36

Money Talks (have you been listening?)

Stewardship means we choose life in the image of God

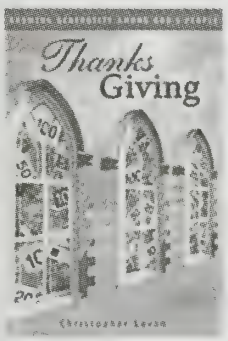
BY TED SIVERNS

Thanks Giving: Growing Generosity Among God's People
By Christopher Levan
United Church Publishing House

A subject that is not dear to the hearts of most people is that of Christian stewardship. Christopher Levan tackles the subject head-on and in so doing has produced a highly readable, entertaining and most of all, helpful book. This is a very practical book with enough theory to support the practical and to provide assurance that the author has done his homework and knows what he is talking about.

There are several different ways of describing the Christian life and these can be summed up in three words: worship, evangelism/mission and stewardship. Mission is not stewardship; stewardship is not mission. They are related and related to the third element, worship, and though the faith can be defined by any one of the three terms the definition must include the other two as part of that definition. Worship is at the core of who we are and what we do. Evangelism or mission is the sharing of the gospel or good news. Stewardship is how we live our lives, loving the world as God loves the world.

Levan knows all of that but in this book, his sixth, the emphasis is on money. (Have I lost you yet?) Money is the *lingua franca* of our culture, the common tongue of the world. Money is not the problem but "how we use the stuff" is the problem. "Money talks," Levan notes. "It is the mechanism for conferring value, the basis for life, and the symbol of power and legitimacy." If we are intimidated by the risk of living and bury our banknotes in a safe place—I'm tempted to say safe investment—there is a little parable about the displeasure of God that contends with us. This is not to say we fall for the exploitation of gambling—here called by at least some of our governments, gaming. Responsible and joyful giving in this world of abundance is what is called for. It is our Visa and Mastercard debits that speak of our priorities, our stewardship. The "chequebook is… where we write our mission statement in real terms."



When Levan says "money talks," he reminds us not only of what our chequebook says but that our money is meant to speak of the ways of God. Admittedly this is not always easily done in a culture that promotes acquiring and keeping. Our acquisitive culture leads us to deny and snub the joy of generous giving. I am reminded that Luther asserted that gratitude is the essence of the Christian life and of the German proverb that says: *Leben ist Loben*—To live is to praise.

The whole story of stewardship is not here nor should we expect it so to be. There is no reference to the roots of stewardship in the baptismal covenant in which the believer is to be something like a sacrament, a sign, one who lives in grateful response to God's gift of creation. At baptism we renounce our way of pretending that we own life and instead embrace the joyful life of giving and forgiving. At Holy Communion we are reminded that God comes to us and works through us in the material world of bread and wine and money and we confess that "all things come from you, and of your own have we given you."

Should you want to know more about the theology behind this book, there are Levan's previous writings and the many books of his mentor, leading Canadian theologian Douglas John Hall. In several books, but especially in *The Steward and Christian Mission*, Hall has given new impetus and direction to the stewardship movement. In this book Hall argued that the steward was a biblical symbol that did not come to fruition in the New Testament because of apocalyptic eschatology and the "Constantinian establishment." This led to a church which sought power (mission!) rather than the sacrifice of servant service. Hall argued that stewardship has come of age and now means unambiguous com-

Continued on page 36

Responsible and joyful giving in this world of abundance is what is called for. It is our Visa and Mastercard debits that speak of our priorities, our stewardship. The 'chequebook is… where we write our mission statement in real terms'

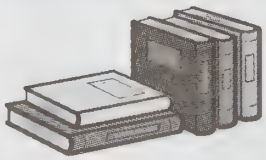
'God's Kingdom' continued from page 34

a certain necessary concreteness. But overall, the book is eminently readable and frequently forces the reader to ponder questions from a new angle.

For example, in her final chapter Dawn refers to a list of seven social sins compiled by Mahatma Gandhi: politics without principle, wealth without work, commerce without morality, pleasure without conscience, education without character, science without humanity, and worship without sacrifice. As she thinks about these, she wonders whether the church's tendency to practice worship without sacrifice has led to the other six failures in our society. If so, "how do we find the courage to lead people into sacrifice in the church and into a right harmony of the other six pairs in the world?" It is a provocative question, one well worth exploring. She even begins that exploration by proposing that we might think about painting the picture of God's Kingdom radiantly so that we are empowered with its joy to live its cost.

Some might think that following a Sabbath way of life as outlined in this volume is impractical and strange, but, in the long run, it has the potential to set the church on a path that is hopeful and enabling. Congregations, pastors and other church leaders who take such an approach to their lives might just discover that they really do have a new sense of call from God. – *Rev. Arthur Van Seters is Principal Emeritus of Knox College, Toronto.*

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'Money Talks' continued from page 35

mitment to the world. It means caring about the third world nations. It means a theology of nature and a commitment to peace issues. Stewardship means that we choose life and in so doing "image God." Hall's view of stewardship is wide-ranging and comprehensive.

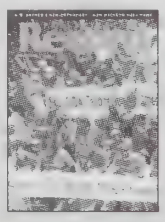
The word stewardship sometimes refers to the entire Christian endeavor as in the often quoted: "What we do after we say, I believe." Sometimes it narrows a little as in the Sunday School definition of "time, talent and treasure." And sometimes it narrows to something like devious ways of raising money or a fancy word for fundraising. It is a most slippery word but in this book Levan is clear. His main interest is on that part of stewardship defined as money.

Levan's emphasis, especially after the early brief chapters, is on the practical. This is a how-to book for congregational pastors and other church leaders who raise money for the work of God through the church.

There are helpful paragraphs about the management of time, a call for hospitality, narrative budgeting ("putting a human face on the budget"), the lost art of play and *Sabbath* as a restriction to greed. There are words about deep-seated hope and our human hunger for vision. There is also the practical reminder that "if you want money don't ask for prayer." Each of the short chapters has a number of helpful discussion questions.

Beginning with the recognition that the church is "incompetent and mediocre in our ministry of fundraising" Levan shows honest ways to express need and anticipate response. The book ends where, with the author's blessing, some people may choose to begin. The five very helpful appendices include Template for a Thanksgiving Campaign, a veritable summary of the book's arguments, Glossary of Gripes, Sample Case Statement, Checklist for Visitors and an interesting game called Applause. Also included is a carefully thought-out list of book and video resources.

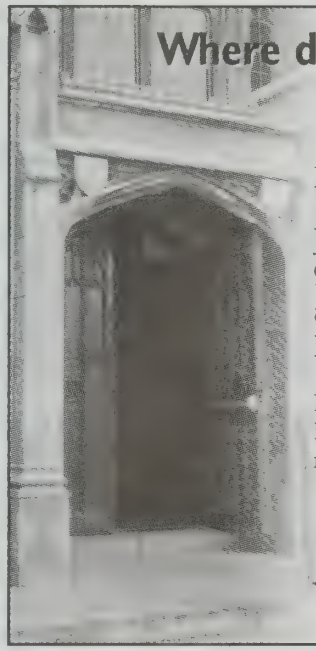
Anyone considering a discussion on the stewardship of money or planning any kind of financial campaign will not be disappointed in this book. Get it. Read it. Put it into practice. – *Ted Siverns is the former Chair of the Ecumenical Stewardship Centre and the Canadian Stewardship Council and currently is Director of Presbyterian Formation at Vancouver School of Theology.*





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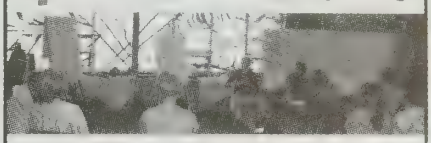
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We shall not see his like again

Raymond A. Humphries was a dear friend and great teacher

We met one another in 1962. It was not long before our two families became good friends. Raymond and Cindy lived on Isle Jesu in an area called Duvernay. He had been appointed the minister of St. John's there. The two families visited one another until Raymond and Cindy left Montreal for California.

At meetings of presbytery, he was often quite hilarious. One evening, the Convenor of Church Extension reported that all new congregations were doing well with the exception of St. John's, Duvernay. He wondered whether the young minister there was doing enough to visit Protestants in the area. Raymond replied: "Moderator, I invite the Convenor to come to Duvernay and find any such people. If he should find any such person, I will parade him in a pix down the street on Corpus Christi Day."

Raymond read voraciously and seemed to remember everything he read. His range of reading material was totally eclectic. He spent part of one winter reading about Greek pottery. His undergraduate degree in Latin and English equipped him well to quote poetry and prose in either language. He had memorized parts of the Anglo Saxon Chronicle and delighted in quoting from *The Wand of The Feet.*

His appointment as Professor of New Testament at Knox College was an inspired one. A minister in our church has e-mailed me to say that the course Raymond taught on the Gospel of Mark at Knox College was the best course he had taken over his time there. Since his death other similar testimonies have been given by students who both respected his teaching and liked him personally. He was a rigorous teacher with a playful side as well.

Raymond and I went together to annual meetings of the Society of Biblical Literature. He seemed hardly ever to sleep at all. Whereas, I would lie abed soaking for a few minutes after waking, he would be on his feet. At these times Robin Salters would phone to ask whether we were ready to go to breakfast. On one occasion I heard Raymond say about me: "He is lying in his bed contemplating the ceiling." Another morning he replied: "He is in the bathroom scraping the venerable face."

There is so much more to be said and so little space in which to say it. That we lost him some 10 years ago to one of the worst diseases of human kind is nothing short of a tragedy. A research scientist has speculated that it is normally very bright people who fall victim to this dreadful disease. If that is so, then its victim in this case was a natural target.

He was a dear friend and we miss him greatly. To quote an old saying: "We shall not see his like again."

– R. Sheldon MacKenzie

Strength of heart

Barbara Edmonds has left a huge void

Barbara Edmonds, co-founder of Edmonds, Gallagher and McLaughlin Insurance Brokers Limited and Royal Lepage Edmonds and Associates Real Estate, Pembroke and life member of Petawawa Presbyterian passed away peacefully in a hospital, in March last year, at the age of 74.

Barbara was a fixture in the Pembroke-Petawawa area. Her family was amongst the original members of the Presbyterian Church and she was instrumental in contributing to the fundraising for the current building on Ethel St. She focused her life on three things: family, faith and community.

Rev. Brian Sharpe in his eulogy said, "Barbara lived life by the motto, For it to be, it's up to me." God made each of us for a purpose she said, and it was our job to fulfill that purpose.

Barbara was open and accepting and extremely practical. I have a great respect for her and a great humility that she would share her thoughts and her faith in life and death with me. I am inspired by her calmness of spirit and her strength of heart.

All her friends from church had the same memory of Barbara as a tireless worker who was humble, never seeking recognition for her contributions. Francis Dupuis, a fellow Presbyterian and committee member for Meals on Wheels said, "Meals on Wheels has lost a tireless worker. She worked tirelessly to help. She delivered meals every Friday for 30 years. Her passing has left a huge void."

She was also active in other community organizations such as the food bank, the Alexandra Club otherwise known as the Civic Hospital auxiliary. In her later years she carried kits to sleeping children around the world and supported the Stephen Lewis AIDS foundation. *–Hilda Young*



Speaking different languages

Presbyteries have to recognize local gifts in each congregation

BY PETER BUSH

This summer I spent time with the statistical report of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

- One-quarter (25.7 per cent or 238) of PCC congregations reported average worship attendance in 2005 as 30 or fewer. A further 20.3 per cent (188 congregations) reported attendance between 31 and 50. That is, nearly half (46 per cent or 426 congregations) of PCC congregations had 50 or fewer people in worship.
- The other end of the spectrum, 7.5 per cent of PCC congregations (70) reported their average worship attendance in 2005 as 200 or more.

Analyzed this way the figures confirm: The Presbyterian Church in Canada is a denomination of small congregations.

There is another way to look at the figures:

- The 70 largest congregations in the country (those with 200 or more in worship) account for 30.8 per cent of all the Presbyterians who are in worship on a given Sunday. (Five of the nine largest congregations in the PCC are Korean.)
- At the same time, six per cent of Canadian Presbyterians worship on Sunday with 29 or fewer people.

To paint this picture even more starkly: the nine largest Presbyterian congregations in the country have a combined attendance greater than the combined attendance of the 238 smallest congregations.

Depending on what is counted, two very different pictures of the church emerge. These divergent pictures create challenges for presbyteries. For presbyteries are charged with overseeing the ministry of the congregations within their bounds, but a one-size-fits-all approach does not work.

Presbyteries have a couple of hundred congregations with 30 or fewer people in worship to relate to and look after. Congregations this size function in a particular way. Like a family, decisions are made through extended conversation and finally arriving at consensus. Worship reflects the particular needs of the congregational family, and the minister is the family's spiritual guide. Questions about financial viability are always close to the surface as these congregations are constantly negotiating ways to stay open.

Yet nearly one-third of Presbyterians worship in congregations with 200 or more people in worship. These congregations are served by a team of program staff. The leadership team casts a vision and works to implement goals. Congregations over 200 face challenges in managing personnel, articulating vision and developing and staffing new programs.

These two types of congregations often seem to speak different languages, sharing little in common. For example, the sessions of congregations with 200 or more are likely to give a great deal of thought to the study paper on Multiple Minister Congregations sent down to sessions by the General Assembly and spend very little time discussing the Lay Missionary study paper which was also sent down by the assembly. Meanwhile, the sessions of congregations with 30 or fewer in worship are likely to have a significant conversation about the Lay Missionary proposals while sending the Multiple Minister document to the recycling bin. Both congregations with 30 or fewer and congregations of 200 or more are here to stay, along with the experiential and cultural divide that exists between them.

Despite the differences between small and large congregations, there are approaches that can benefit both types of congregation. Two of the habits presbyteries need to encourage in both large and small congregations are:

- High expectation culture: Presbyteries should expect excellence of themselves and of the sessions to which they relate. Excellence is not an issue of congregational size; both large and small congregations can be committed to excellence.
- Recognition of local leaders: Presbyteries should encourage congregations to recognize and use the gifts of the lay people in their pews. Both small and large congregations would benefit from having leaders who innately understand the congregational culture and do ministry that makes sense in their context. Congregations would be supported in employing program staff on the basis of ministry gifts and not on the basis of credentials.

Focusing on these two habits will assist presbyteries in finding flexible ways which support both small and large congregations in developing personalized patterns of ministry that are sustainable in their context.

Rev. Peter Bush is a teaching elder at Knox, Mitchell, Ont. He recently co-authored *Where 20 or 30 are Gathered: Leading Worship in the Small Church* with Christine O'Reilly. This is the first of three articles. Part two will appear in the March issue.

A frightening responsibility

He wouldn't trade parenting for a full head of hair



"Children are a great comfort in your old age—and they help you reach it faster too." – LIONEL KAUFFMAN

On the night of my 35th birthday—in an act I will remember as long as I have functioning brain cells—my oldest son asked me, "How old are you again?" When I told him, he cocked his head to one side and said, "Wow! You're half dead!"

I think I handled the situation with admirable self-control. Calmly tucking the child into bed, I aimed a kiss squarely at his forehead, then went to my study and removed him from the will.

Yes, throughout history children have been responsible for aging their parents. Back in Biblical times it took longer. Methusaleh lived 969 years. But remember that his children had not heard of dating, begun placing earrings in their noses, or discovered loud music.

Recently I came home from a tough day at the office to find that our house was shaking. Our sons, Stephen and Jeffrey, had replaced my Frank Sinatra tape with something that sounded like some very angry people had gotten together with the express purpose of harming one another with jackhammers. Though I'm sure the tape contained actual words, this is what I heard:

"OYA BOOM BOOM OYA BOOM BOOM WAHOO BOOM BOOM"

(Turn up volume and repeat chorus)

"Hey! That sounds like somebody strangling a bagpiper!" I yelled. "TURN IT DOWN!"

"BURN *WHAT* DOWN?" hollered Jeffrey.

In the kitchen, Ramona was peacefully preparing supper—thanks to industrial-strength ear plugs.

"Guys," I said, after the volume control had been returned to its rightful spot, "when I was a boy, I was told that this kind of music kills plants. Chickens stop laying eggs when they hear this stuff. People start world wars. Let's find something else to do. Like go outside and see if this tape will burn."

"We kinda like it," they said.

Another big reason I am aging rapidly is the fact that my daughter reached puberty at a speed upwards of 900 miles an hour and boys show up on our doorstep asking for her hand in marriage. If I sound paranoid, please forgive me. I'll feel better once I install land mines in the front yard.

When our kids were smaller, Dad and Mom came to visit. The same parents who once asked me to turn my music down. The boys were playing dcTalk loudly enough to annoy people on Mars (which, interestingly, is where this band originates), and I noticed big grins on my parents' faces. Perhaps, I thought, the real joy of grandparenting is watching your children be tortured with the same instruments they used to torture you. But as the evening wore on I came to a very different conclusion.

You see, Mom and Dad didn't seem to notice the music as much as they noticed the kids. They listened as Stephen read the lyrics to *I'm Into Jesus*. They held grandchildren on their knees; they took an interest in their homework, and asked them about their day. Seventy-five years of living had taught them that life passes too quickly for us to spend it majoring on the minors. And so I've watched them hug teenagers who have more earrings than brain cells. I've seen them on their knees confidently asking God to accomplish as much for their grandchildren as He has for their kids.

I don't know about you, but I need to be reminded of these things every now and then. I need to be reminded that the same God who has been faithful to each generation isn't about to stop with this one. I need to remember that although parenting is sometimes a frightening responsibility, it is also a joyful privilege. In fact, I wouldn't trade my kids for a good night's sleep. A full head of hair. Or some healthy plants.

Now, I'd better go. It's time to revise the will.

Phil Callaway is a speaker and bestselling author of books like *It's Always Darkest Before the Fridge Door Opens* (Bethany House). Visit him at www.laughagain.org.

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BARTLETT, T. W. Brock, suddenly on September 23rd in his 83rd year. Christened, confirmed and married in St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Port Credit, Ont. Upon retirement, he became an active member at Knox Presbyterian Church, Sunridge, Ont. Survived by his loving wife Nonie (nee Lenore Fraser), sons David (Cathy), Tom (Lynn), Gordon (Monika), four granddaughters Erin (Mark Robertson), Elaine, Robin, Emma, four grandsons Fraser, Karl, Konrad, Kurt and one great granddaughter Neve.

JONES, Robert C., aged 91 and long-time member and elder of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Belleview, Ont.

KELLER, Bill, long-time faithful member and elder of Knox Presbyterian Church, Dundas, Ont., died on Tuesday, October 24, 2006. A kind, caring man.

PARK, Chan-Hyou, on August 29, 2006. Dedicated elder and long time faithful member of Vaughan Community Church (previously East Toronto Korean Presbyterian Church), Thornhill, Ont. Loved and very dearly missed by his wife Chung-Hee Park and his sons Billy and Charles.

Rate for obituary notices: $1 per word or $65 per column inch (the lower amount) plus GST.

Regarding items for this column, contact: Presbyterian Record, 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, Ontario M3C 1J7; phone: (416) 441-1111 or 1-800-619-7301; fax: (416) 441-2825; e-mail: obituaries@presbyterianrecord.ca

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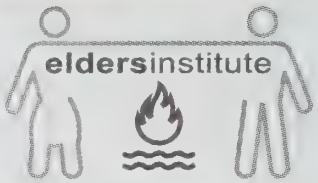
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A kick in the stomach

Only those who have been through it know what it's like

BY VICKI HOMES

I couldn't believe it was happening. Oh, how I wish I could turn back the clock. It was Maundy Thursday—it was indeed the last supper that I would have with my husband.

It was 1991—my children were only four and six years old. Who was I? A young woman, a Christian with a real sense of call to ministry.

And now this? Was this a sign? Was God saying "back off—this isn't the career for you?"

We had been married seven years and here I was 37 years old, a single mother. My father was dying of a disease much like ALS and I remember thinking how hard this must be on him and my mother.

It seemed like everything in my life was going wrong. I was losing my dad and now I had lost my husband. "Why was this happening to me?" was one of the questions that I asked myself over and over.

There was never an answer of course … just a constant questioning of why, why me?

If you have ever been kicked in the stomach you will understand the pain. It was like that the first few days, a pain in the pit of my stomach that wouldn't go away. And the tears; I didn't think they would ever stop as I wondered if I would ever be able to piece my life together again!

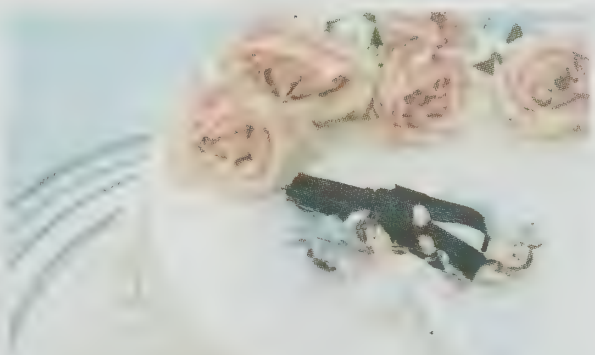
But I had lots of family and friends who called and visited and walked with me through the dark days.

Sometimes they helped.

Sometimes they didn't.

Sometimes I made sense.

Sometimes I didn't.



'How could he have done this to me? How could I have let this happen to me? Why didn't I see this coming?'

It is hard to imagine that one minute you can be laughing with your best friend, and the next minute you are sobbing, wondering if you will ever survive.

I remember a lot about the first day or so. The day after he left, I drove to my best friend's house to tell her the news. She broke down crying and wanted me to tell her it wasn't true. There I was consoling her, telling her that everything would be all right.

I have other friends who are still very near and dear to me. There is a wonderful couple who put aside their life to help me live mine. They were the ones who made sure I was not alone on New Year's Day and included the boys and I for a Sunday dinner.

They were there to help me with the boys, help me with the car, and help me with the house. Believe me, a little problem with my car could send me into a spin.

And then there were the "not so helpful friends."

The ones who seemed more interested in finding out the juicy gossip or the reason. There must be a reason, after all!

You must have seen it coming?

Did he meet someone else?

Was he cheating on you?

I hope you are not going to go after our husbands?

Was it the sex?

If you have walked this journey you know what I am talking about. That day, that moment when you are feeling your worst, you are feeling lost and you think it can't get any worse and then someone says something like, "I hope you are not going to go after our husbands!" It's like you've been kicked in the stomach all over again.

My thoughts didn't make much sense. Your mind seems to drift between shock, denial, sadness and anger. One minute I would be sobbing and thinking: "What did I do wrong? I must have been a bad wife," and "Who is going to love me now with all my stretch marks?" The next minute I'd be pounding my pillow in anger wondering, "How could he have done this to me? How could I have let this happen? Why didn't I see this coming?"

But the truth is this: whether you see it coming or not, whether it was his fault or your fault, or both, there is one thing for certain. If your spouse has left you, you don't have a choice. You just have to get on with life.

So how do you get on with life as you ride this emotional roller coaster of sadness and sorrow?

How do you?

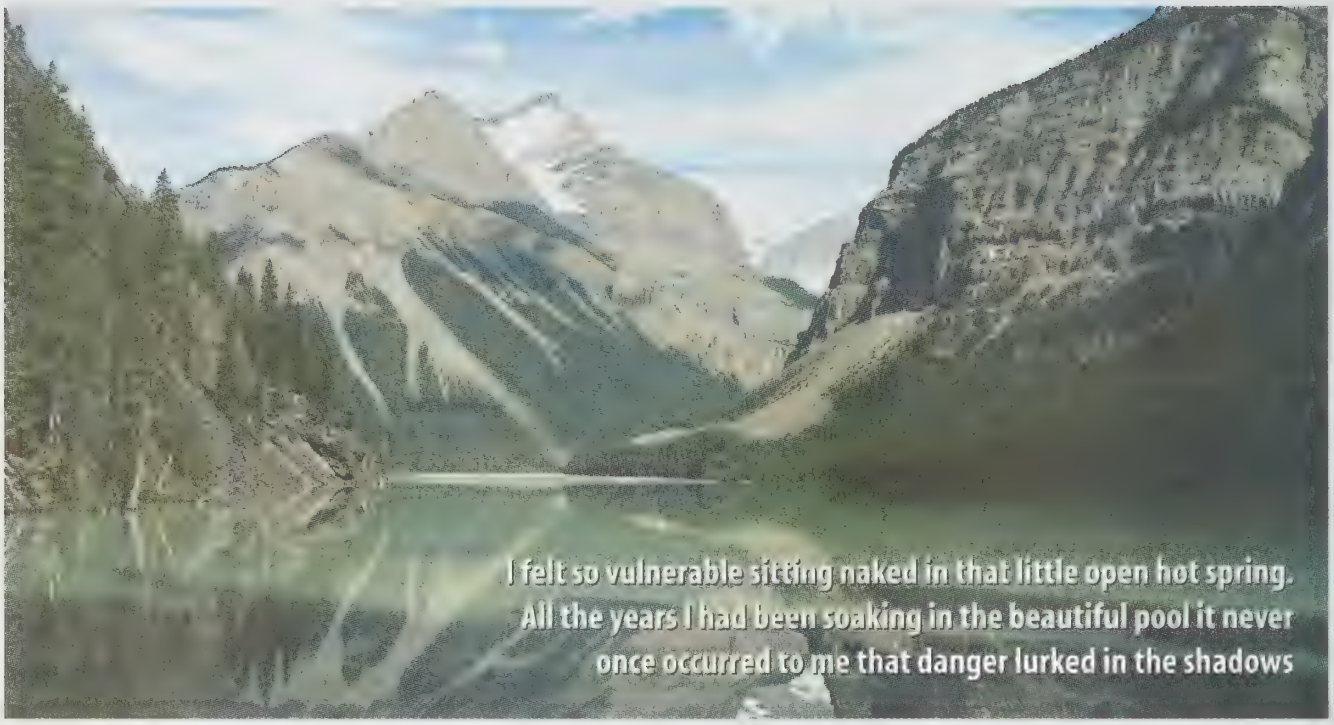
Rev. Vicki Homes, now married to Dan, is the minister at Summerside, Prince Edward Island.

This is the first of three articles.
Part two will appear in the March issue.

Wilderness epiphany

There is no doubt I am out of control and God is in control

BY DAVID WEBBER



It was a special spot embedded in the wilderness of the Rocky Mountains. It was a hot spring nestled in a cliff on the edge of Sheep Creek. My Dad and I lived in a shack without running water, so we went there every Sunday for our weekly bath. Even when it was 35 below (Celsius) and the snow was three feet deep, the hot spring maintained lush green vegetation and warmth for a few metres around, an oasis in the icy desert of winter.

We would sit in that water, Dad and I, with icicles hanging from my hair and from Dad's beard because he didn't have any hair, letting the hot sulfur water soak away every bit of dirt and stress on and in us. There was something about the place that had the power to make even an atheist whisper the word, "God!" It was the best of wilderness: silence, solitude, beauty, refuge. It was that kind of a spot. It never occurred to me that it was anything else, until one Sunday we picked our way down the cliff on the trail that led to the small pool in the rocks, disrobed on the edge of the snow, lowered ourselves into the steaming hot water with a delicious sigh and gazed across the icy babble of Sheep Creek straight into the face of a fresh cougar kill.

The mule deer doe was less than an hour dead. Steam was still coming from the chest cavity that had been opened as if by a surgeon's knife. There was no sign of a chase or struggle and very little blood. Cougars are nothing if not efficient. My hair bristled. I felt so vulnerable sitting naked in that little open hot spring. All the years I had been soaking in the beautiful pool it never once occurred to me that danger lurked in the shadows.

But that is precisely the nature of wilderness. Eugene Peterson points this out in his book of reflections on the life of King David, *Leap Over A Wall*. From my own personal experience, wilderness is the place where beauty and ugliness kiss, where refuge and danger dance, where a sky is baby-eyes-blue one minute and demon-eyed-black the next, where a black bear is a bumbling clown and in the snap of a finger becomes a deadly predator, where being lost is only one step away on a familiar hike. Wilderness is where I am vulnerable like no other place. And because of this, it is where the possibility of God becomes a necessity.

It's no accident that in the Bible,

PHOTO: DAVID WEBBER

wilderness has been where God has most often been encountered and people of God have most often been formed. In the Bible, wilderness seems pregnant with epiphany and revelation. It seemed so for Abraham, it seemed so for Moses, it seemed so for David, it seemed so for Jesus. It seemed so for the people of God who followed them too. I know it is so for me.

I am no Hebrew scholar but I like reading books by those who are. A recent reading caused me to look up the word for wilderness in my Hebrew dictionary. In Hebrew, the word is מִדְבָּר (midbar) and it means wasteland, barren wilderness, i.e., a relatively large tract of sparsely inhabited land, or virtually empty of habitation. But it also means "mouth," i.e., a part of the body that is the instrument of speech. From the biblical perspective it seems to me that wilderness is both. Wilderness is physically a natural barren land, empty of human habitation (and please don't ever allegorize it to mean a "spiritual wilderness," at least not in my presence). Wilderness is also the mouth of God, the place out of which God speaks.

What takes years to happen in the human-controlled environment of settlement is speed-shifted in the wilderness. The special grace of wilderness is that it is a catalyst for revival and spiritual formation. In the wilderness, in its beauty, quiet, splendour, solitude, emptiness, order and majesty … God proclaims himself powerful Creator-Redeemer-Sustainer. God is everywhere before my eyes and in my face and in my head. In the wilderness, with its potential danger, sinister threats, real risks, even sudden attacks … God proclaims me impotent subject. My human vulnerability is everywhere before my eyes and in my face and in my head. In the wilderness, there is absolutely no doubt that I am out of control and that God is in control. And when I get to the end of myself like this, I quickly come to the beginning with God, a real beginning, a beginning where God can reveal and speak, a beginning where I will look and listen. Wilderness for me is a real place of epiphany and revealing Word.

Apparently, wilderness is not for everybody; at least not everybody would choose to be there. And for many of us who do choose to be there, wilderness is solely a place for hunting, fishing, hiking and other recreation. As recreationists we tend to go to great lengths to expunge wilderness of its inherent dangers while trying to maintain all of its beauty to serve us. Consequently, wilderness isn't so much experienced as a place of tension and therefore an extraordinary place of human need and God revealing himself in the face of that need. But for those of us who intentionally choose to enter the tension of wilderness—the tension between its splendour and its peril, between its simple peace and menacing danger—the wilderness is filled with special grace. Indigenous peoples knew this in their ancient religion and would intentionally enter wilderness on their spirit quests. It never ceases to amaze me how so-called pagans could pick up intuitively what Christians of the last couple of hundred years missed right in front of their eyes. It never ceases to amaze me how present-day Christians quickly dismiss out of hand what people of faith in Scripture and people of faith in history have understood as being crucial. The grace of wilderness is not only hugely significant in Scripture for everybody from Abraham on down to John the Baptist and Jesus, but what on earth do we think was going on in the desert with the Essene community and the Qumran community at the time of Jesus? And what do we think was going on with the Desert Fathers who spawned the Christian monastic movement from the wilderness some 200 years later? All of these, like the patriarchs of our faith before them, had discovered the grace of God in wilderness and intentionally sought that grace by withdrawing there in faith.

And this is what all this has to do with you and I. There is powerful grace from God for the life that intentionally enters real wilderness, in faith. God will meet us there and do amazing things with us there. God always has … God always will.

Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the *Record*. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C. house church ministry. His most recent book is *Like a Winter's Aspen: Embracing the Creator's Fire.*

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WILMA WELSH

That wee small voice

Take time for the Sabbath despite the busyness of the day

During these past few weeks, my travels as moderator have taken me to Alberta, Nova Scotia, and British Columbia as well as to several places in Ontario. I have visited synods, presbyteries and congregations. I have participated in meetings of the national church and the Women's Missionary Society. I am encouraged by the life and vitality of our Church and its congregations; the faithfulness of our members, their warmth and their caring for each other. I have come away from each visit with a feeling of excitement about the health of the congregations within The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Our ethnic congregations are alive and vibrant and very much a part of our denomination. In Vancouver, on the same Sunday I visited the Chinese Church, the Taiwanese and our Korean brothers and sisters at Surrey Presbyterian Church. Despite the busyness of the day I was glad to have been able to visit each of them. They all have special ministries for their members who desire to worship and study in their mother tongue. They also provide English-speaking services for the younger generation. We are blessed by the ethnic diversity within our denomination. We are a denomination that welcomes and encourages our brothers and sisters from different backgrounds whether they are Chinese, Korean, Hungarian, or Ghanaian just to name a few.



Margaret Black, left, was given a Life Membership in the Women's Mission Society at Thornhill, Ont. Moderator Wilma Welsh was present at the Thanksgiving worship. Below, Orkney Presbyterian Church, Alberta.

I visited a small church in Orkney, Alberta, a church that sits in the middle of farming land about 150 kilometres north of Calgary. Orkney has an average attendance of about 15-20 plus almost the same number of children and young people. They have three elders. Worshipping with this small congregation was a great experience. I learned so much from them on how to welcome and make visitors feel at home. First impressions tell our visitors if they are welcome. A visitor will decide very quickly whether they want to return to worship in a congregation again. It is my hope that all of our congregations are greeting visitors so warmly.

As we begin the New Year, the *Year of the Sabbath*, I pray that each of us will take time just to listen despite the busyness of our lives. Let us listen for that wee small voice.

Blessings,

M. Wilma Welsh



MODERATOR'S ITINERARY

JANUARY

16 Speak at Presbytery of Lindsay-Peterborough meeting

17 Worship and meet students at Knox College, Toronto

21 Worship and preach at Taiwanese Robert Campbell, Montreal

22 Meeting of Presbytery of Montreal

23 Worship and meet community at Presbyterian College

called to wonder

CREATED BY ERIN WALTON



Every January, the church celebrates the Baptism of Jesus.

Read Matthew 3:13-17 to find out more about the day Jesus was baptized, then see if you can answer the following questions:

1. Where was John baptizing? _____
2. Why was Jesus baptized? _____
3. What descended and came to rest on Jesus? _____
4. Who saw this happen? _____
5. Who said, "You are my beloved son in whom I am well pleased"? _____

Thinking about Jesus' baptism may make you wonder about yours. Ask your Mom or Dad about your baptism. When was it? Who baptized you? Were there any photographs taken?

This may make you wonder why you were baptized as an infant, while Jesus was baptized as an adult. Other children have wondered this before too. Read the following with an adult to help understand your baptism better:

Q: What is the meaning of infant baptism?

A: Infant baptism is based on the idea of a covenant—that God's promises and love are extended "to you and to your children." In return, parents promise to bring their children up in this covenant, teaching them the duties and responsibilities of the Christian faith.

Infant baptism displays that, before you even became aware of God, God claimed you as a member of God's family. Before you could seek to please God, God sought and accepted you.

Q: Do Presbyterians recognize other baptism traditions?

A: Presbyterians recognize all the traditional ways of baptizing (immersion, pouring and sprinkling) as valid. Each method can convey in a special way some aspect of the meaning of baptism. Pouring or sprinkling the water vividly conveys God's spirit coming into the life of the baptized. If a person has been baptized or confirmed in another church, that person will be warmly received into the Presbyterian Church as a brother or sister in Christ.

(Excerpts taken from *This Presbyterian Church of Ours* by John Congram)

NEW WORDS!

There are likely some new words here that you've never seen before. I used the "thesaurus" tool on my computer to understand better what they mean…

Descended:
came down from above

Traditional:
usual, customary

Beloved:
much loved, adored

Immersion:
dunk underwater

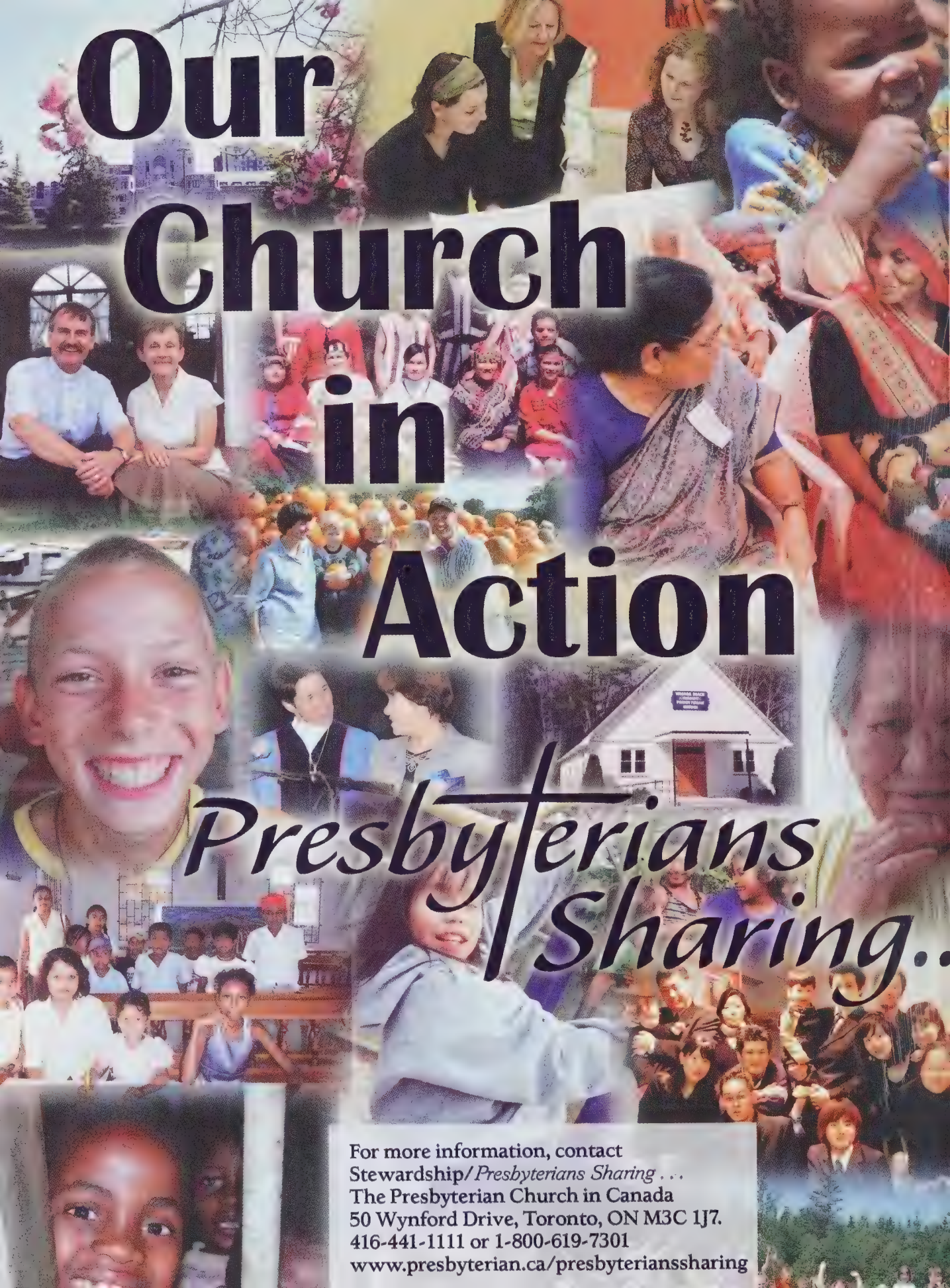
Covenant:
agreement, promise

USE YOUR COMPUTER TO FIND THE MYSTERY WORD:
With an adult, type the word Baptism into a word document on your computer. Then use Tools, Language, Thesaurus to help understand Baptism better. There is one word there that begins with "b". Can you find it?

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A SPECIAL REPORT ON NATIVE MINISTRIES

PRESBYTERIAN Record

February 2007



The path to HEALING

Sharing the pain of residential schools

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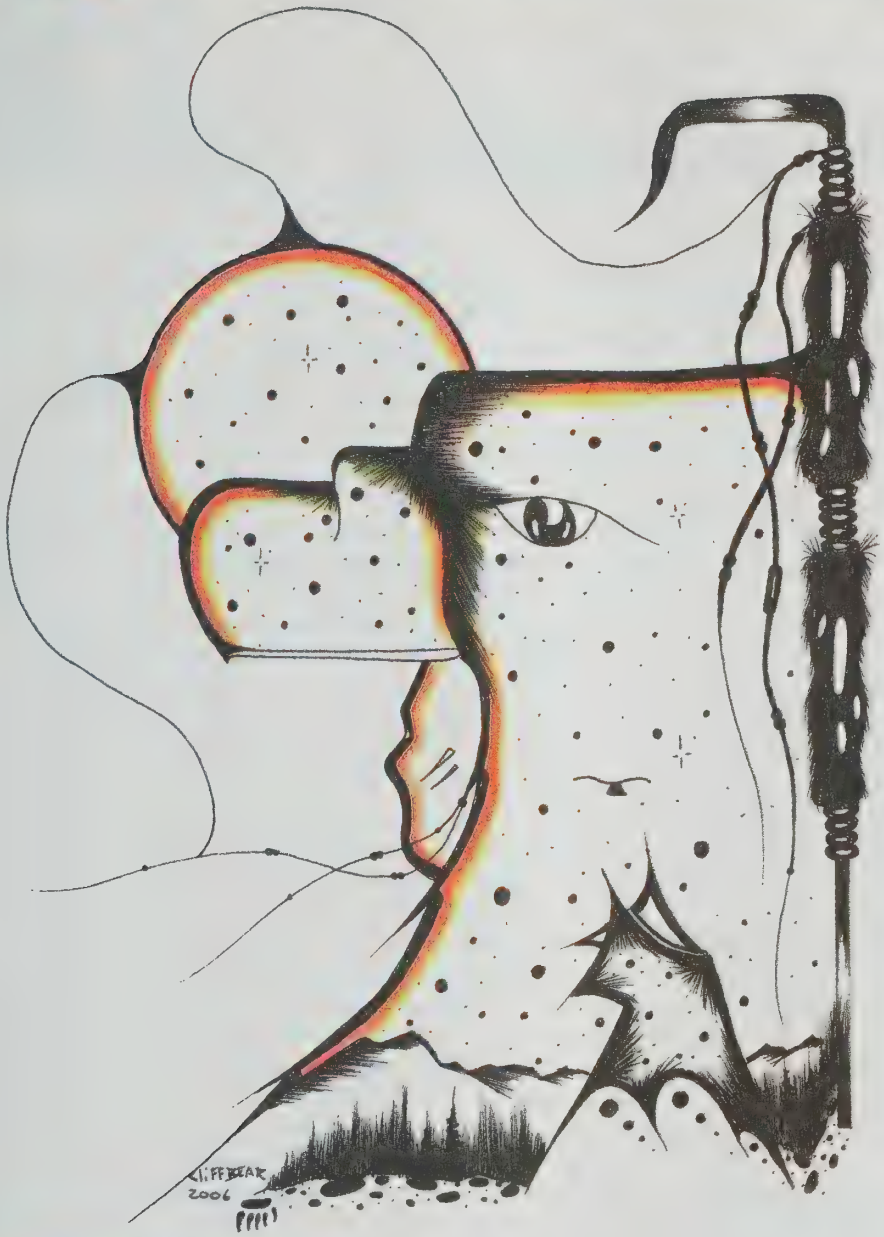
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PRESBYTERIAN Record
FEBRUARY 2007



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COVER FEATURE

16 **The path to healing**
Sharing the pain of residential schools
by Amy MacLachlan, Lori Ransom and Keith Randall

Illustrations: (this page and cover) by Cliff Bear of Winnipeg, a member of the Gordon First Nation, Sask.


DAVID HARRIS

Acknowledge the responsibility

According to a native adage, you have to walk a mile in another person's moccasins before you can understand them. No one said how far you have to walk to understand their pain if you take their moccasins away. • Our cover story, The path to healing, is an attempt to reveal some of the pain caused by residential schools and some of the ways the church is trying to address it.

After union in 1925 The Presbyterian Church was left with only two residential schools, Cecilia Jeffrey in Kenora, Northern Ontario, and Birtle, near Brandon, Manitoba.

Churches began recognizing problems with residential schools by the 1960s and eventually withdrew from them, but it really wasn't until the 1980s that stories of clergy sexual abuse in Newfoundland followed by the Mount Cashel scandal shocked the Canadian consciousness into some wider sensitivity to the physical and sexual abuses in residential school settings, to say nothing of their impact on native culture and society.

Still, a decade slipped by with little done about the situation until lawsuits in the late 1990s focused even more attention on the issue. Churches, facing suits in the millions of dollars, argued that they should not bear all the responsibility, since they were only acting on behalf of the country through the federal government.

More court cases ensued, and there remain loose ends, but Ottawa eventually began negotiating with the churches to limit their liability. In the meantime, the churches had apologized to native people for what happened.

The Presbyterian Church made its apology in 1994 and signed an agreement with Ottawa to cap the church's liability at $2.1 million (later revised to about $1.3 million) for compensation awarded for abuse cases. The church also committed about $1 million to other ministries and support around the healing and reconciliation process between native and non-native people.

The church now supports seven front-line ministries across the country and has recently appointed a national staff person to raise awareness in the pews regarding the schools, their history and impact on those who attended.

Isn't that enough, some ask? Such a question only proves the need for education and engaging with the native community to understand how the schools affect their lives today.

In hindsight, it is unfortunate that assembly council decided to take the $3 million for claims and healing and reconciliation projects from existing church funds rather than engage in fundraising; which it had done for the Journey to Wholeness.

The decision was painless—while the schools caused much pain. It is pain that needs to be shared, and although a financial pinch hardly equals the physical, sexual and emotional pain students suffered, it tends to focus the issue more clearly.

Had congregations been obliged to raise money, they would have had to confront the church's association with this dark history.

So the issue now is how to engage congregations across the country. Paradoxically, we may have something to learn from South Africa, the country that modeled its apartheid system on the Canadian reserve system.

The South African most closely associated with modern apartheid is Hendrik Verwoerd, prime minister of the country during the 1960s. His grandson, Wilhelm, has been tireless in trying to undo the damage his grandfather's policy did.

A former professor of philosophy and theology, Verwoerd has argued narrow, legal definitions of responsibility are unhelpful, because the dominant group in society will say they didn't commit any wrong in their generation, so avoiding history and the legacy that gives them a huge advantage over the wronged group.

Verwoerd has taken up the notion of connectedness as a starting point. He notes that when a relative does something wrong, we tend to feel shame—even though we are guiltless.

Acknowledging their connection to those who did evil in South Africa, Verwoerd says, could help liberate whites from their guilt by association. They could be sorry for what happened beyond a meaningless apology.

In Canada, non-natives have clearly benefitted at the expense of natives. Perhaps we can begin to address the situation by examining our connectedness to the past.

Residential schools happened. None of us can change that nor can we forget it, put it behind us or anything else that tries to obscure the painful past. What we can do is try to understand. And we can bear one another's burdens and walk a couple of miles together.

David Harris

letters

Define experimental

By establishing the Experimental Fund (December 2006 issue), Mr. van Beek gave the Presbyterian Church a wonderful opportunity to fund projects "outside the box." He gave the money with no strings attached, and trusted that the money would be used for "new and unique ways of doing mission and ministry." The article states that during 25 years of the fund's existence $150,000 has been given to new initiatives and $500,000 remains in the bank.

This begs the question: What is the half million dollars doing in the bank, instead of being used for innovative projects?

The article says future plans include bursaries, emergencies and special building needs. Surely these are not "new and unique ways to do mission and ministry." Is there no periodic review and evaluation of what the managers of the fund have done, or not done, in 25 years?

Frank DeVisser
Hanover, Ont.

The fund secretary responds:

The Experimental Fund can only distribute income received from the annual investment earned on its capital, which now stands at just over half a million dollars, after 25 years. There have been occasions in the past where worthy projects were at hand, but sufficient income was not. As the capital grows, more income can be spent.

With respect to "bursaries, emergencies and special building needs," this provision was added to the constitution at the benefactor's request several years ago, as he envisioned the day when funds might be available but no suitable projects. He did not want money sitting around that could be used for otherwise good purposes. Hence, a secondary purpose for the use of such money was added.

I assure the writer and the church that the directors take their responsibilities seriously with respect to their administration of the Experimental Fund. And there is no objection or restriction to persons of goodwill who might wish to enlarge the present capital base. More information about the fund can be gained from the Church's web site.

Rev. Dr. Fred Rennie,
secretary, The Experimental Fund

Unify the message

What gives???

I have finally gotten myself educated as to what I thought was the mission direction of our church and my congregation has enthusiastically responded.

During what I thought was an exciting, motivating presentation at CY2006 last summer, I was quickly awakened to the conflict which apparently has been going on between the mission work of PWS&D and World Vision, but which I understood had been resolved within our ranks.

It seems that the smiling boy with the smiling goat on the cover of the World Vision catalogue represents a manner of giving that is in conflict with the philosophy of PWS&D. While it is widely thought that World Vision does a wonderful job, apparently there are some issues regarding working with partners in those communities, affecting whole communities rather than individuals, etc. Fine. I trust the leadership of our denomination, and that they have carefully examined the variety of ways in which we might respond to the needs of others around the world. I trust that after much discussion, education and prayer, that they have chosen and/or developed the way they believe is best for us.

This year we have requested, have received and have already promoted the Something Extra program and our church is responding. Although it is certainly a poorer second cousin in terms of production only to the smiling boy/smiling goat Christmas Guide, it is a great first effort. The inside of the front cover of Something Extra reveals the difference our money can make—everything from a $5-gift to $400, with details as to what those funds can buy. The next page, in 50 words or less heralds the

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So the question is this—one copy of Something Extra comes to the church. It may make it to an unread bulletin board, it may not. World Vision's bigger, better, smiling boy/smiling goat Christmas Gift Catalogue gets into the home of everyone who receives the *Record*. Hmmm, let me think, Which one do you think is better positioned for response?

Would those who have been raised into leadership positions within our denomination please have a conversation with one another now and again, even a discussion, and come to some agreement, or a vote that passes even by the slimmest of margins, and send to those of us who toil in the rice fields one clear, consistent, dare I say, unified message?

As my sainted mother used to say, "Are we for 'em or agin 'em?"

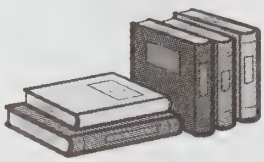
Shaun Seaman
Kanata, Ont.

Editor's note: World Vision pays to advertise in this magazine and our board of directors can find no reason to discriminate against the organization. Presbyterians work for World Vision, sit on its board and former moderator Rev. Ken McMillan is a tireless ambassador for them.

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Read that book!

I was very surprised to see the strange version of my letter in the December issue. I certainly didn't say: "I have just finished reading John Visser's excellent biography of W. W. *Bryant*." I did say: "I have just finished reading John Visser's excellent book, The Neo-Orthodox Theology of W. W. Bryden." It is the theology that is significant, not Dr. Bryden's life, inspiring as it was.

I also said that it was "the," rather than "a," most stimulating book on theology since my reading of Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich, but this is a small point of clarity.

I'm afraid the letter as you printed it wouldn't encourage anyone to read a book recommended by someone so inattentive as to call Dr. Bryden, *W.W. Bryant*, or to mistake this vital book on theology as a biography.

Mary Dowling
Fergus, Ont.

Who's that girl?

I note in the *Record* that someone with the initials AM writes quite a few columns.

I checked in the appendix to our dictionary and quote the following possible answers as to who AM may be:



Albert Medal—British

Anno Mundi—in the year of the world

Ante Meridien—before noon

Artisium Magister—Master of Arts

Ave Maria—Hail Mary

None of the above applies so I shall settle for the answer being Angelic Moderator.

G. MacKintosh
Port Coquitlam, B.C.

Editor notes: To the best of our knowledge Ms. MacKintosh is in no way related to the *Record's* staff writer Amy MacLachlan; and that no one related to Mrs. MacLachlan commissioned MacKintosh to write this letter. Nor are we aware of why we keep mentioning Amy MacLachlan's name in this post script.

Thank you

The December 2006 issue was delightful. How wonderful and refreshing to view the artistic renderings of the children. We need more from the children in future issues. Thank you for this Christmas greeting via the *Record.*

June Heale
Onoway, Alta.

The *Presbyterian Record* welcomes letters to the editor. Please include your name, home address and a daytime telephone number. We reserve the right to edit all letters for length and clarity.

letters@presbyterianrecord.ca

St. David's Presbyterian Church
271 Glenmore Road,
Kelowna, BC V1V 1V7

An invitation is extended to all former members and adherents to join in celebration of our 50th Anniversary.

We will be participating in the following:

Welcome Back Registration
Friday, April 13 at 7:00 pm
(bring your pictures)

Dinner Banquet
Saturday, April 14 at 6:00 pm
Tickets Available

Anniversary Service of Worship
Sunday, April 15 at 10:00 am

For more information please contact the office of St. David's at (250) 762-0624
or
email: stdavidschurch@uniserve.com
RSVP by March 1, 2007

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"Making Peace in the Household of God"
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One person's junk is another's mission project. These senior high students at St. Andrew's, Fredericton, held a rummage sale and raised $750 for local, national and international mission projects, which included these four high chairs for the youngest amongst their congregation to participate in church functions. The missionaries are: Yeonkyung You, Minji You, Andrew Stehouwer, Martin Stehouwer, Jenni Murray, Courtney DeWolfe and Alice MacKay.



Five dollars buys immunization for one child living in the Bhil field of India through PWS&D. These children from Armour Heights, Toronto, decided immunization would be their fall project. They did fundraising, their session matched their efforts, and over $1,000 helping more than 200 children, was given to a delighted Geoff Olson of the PWS&D committee.

For more People & Places submissions please visit our website: www.presbyterianrecord.ca

HAD CAKE LATELY? Share your celebrations with the rest of the church. Send your stories to PnP@presbyterianrecord.ca along with your digital photographs, 300 dpi minimum, high quality JPEGs. Or mail the photographs to: The Record, 50 Wynford Dr., Toronto, M3C 1J7.

To be considered for People and Places, photographs should be sharp and everyone clearly identified. The *Record* reserves the right to reject any photos not of sufficient quality. Photographs cannot be returned.



They sure love him at First, Pembroke, Ont. On the occasion of Rev. Daniel H. Forget's 25th anniversary of ordination, the congregation praised him for "his thought-provoking sermons, his singing and for keeping his flock together." That Sunday last May also marked the 81st anniversary of the church. Forget was presented with a new Pentecost stole; $500 was donated to Presbyterians Sharing in his recognition and then session took him and his wife, Rev. Bonnie Jennings to dinner at a local restaurant. He's seen here with the elders: Back—Jack Carson, John Horner, Bill Pearson, Sean Devereux; second row—Don Wallace, Leonard Hopkins, Doug Davies; front—Ann Hamilton, Rev. Forget, Arlyss Young, Walter M. Inglis, Dale Woermke & Ted O. Dupuis. (Missing—Roy K. Harle and Ann Thomson).



Too old to be juniors and too young to be seniors, these seven- and eight-year-olds at St. Andrew's, Kamloops, B.C., went on a mission learning/sharing experience, inspired by *Water Partners* from church offices. In learning about the sanctity of water, they understood more about their own privileged lives: donating a coin to PWS&D's thank you boxes each time they turned on the tap to wash their hands, or each time they entered their home, reminding themselves they have shelter and water. From left: Aidan Burtis, Michelle Wong, Allysa de Vries, Jaylene de Vries.



The gentleman is David Lavers, clerk of session at West River, Durham, Nova Scotia. On the far right is Rev. Barb Fotheringham. The occasion is the 150th anniversary of continuous service, celebrated last May. And the three ladies in the centre have the distinction of having blessed West River with a combined service through its music program that exceeds its 150 years: Joy Robley has been in the choir for 55 years, Lois Maclean for 67 years, and Norma Wood, currently the organist for 50 years.

To see the whole congregation and the session members please visit our website.

PWS&D reaches HIV-positive North

Church agency works on a truly global scale

The Towards a World Without AIDS campaign of Presbyterian World Service and Development not only funds projects in far away countries; it assists people right here in Canada. As of December 31st, more than $1 million had been raised for the campaign since its launch in 2004. About $75,000 of that has been allocated to support projects in Canada, such as:

- Positive Living North: No kh_yoh t'sih'en t'sehena Society fights the AIDS pandemic in northern British Columbia.
- Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network helps raise the aboriginal profile in the battle against HIV/AIDS.
- Healing Our Nations – Atlantic First Nations AIDS Network raises HIV/AIDS awareness among aboriginal women.

In Africa, funds from the campaign continue to support Ekwendeni Hospital in Malawi. In Asia, the church is providing education on the prevention of HIV/AIDS, access to testing facilities and distribution of condoms, as well as encouraging alternative income generating opportunities. In Central America, the Nimehuatzin Foundation promotes solidarity toward peoples living with HIV and the prevention of new HIV infections in several cities in Nicaragua. Campaign funds will help strengthen the assistance given to people living with HIV and AIDS, address discrimination and promote respect for human rights.

PWS&D is also contributing $50,000 of Canadian Foodgrains Bank equity toward a food aid program in Sudan. Led by the Mennonite Central Committee, 4,000 metric tons of Canadian wheat will reach extremely vulnerable people throughout that country. The total cost of the shipment is $5 million, with $1 million coming from CFGB members and $4 million from the Canadian International Development Agency. Food aid initiatives in Sudan are slowly moving from free ration handouts to programs where the beneficiaries are improving their ability to provide food for themselves.

PWS&D members travelled to India in November for the official inauguration of a rebuilt village that was destroyed during the Dec. 2004 tsunami. Individuals and congregations contributed more than $1.3 million to PWS&D's appeal, allowing a rapid response in the affected regions in partnership with Action by Churches Together. Donations have helped rebuild homes, restore water and sanitation facilities, replace fishing equipment and rebuild livelihoods. In addition to the funds raised by the PCC, Canadian churches pooled their resources to access $6 million in matching funds from CIDA—enough to completely rebuild six villages in India with homes, schools, clinics and community centers. To read about the inauguration of one of these villages, visit www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd/indiablogmenu.html

PWS&D is asking Presbyterians to donate money to support people in Pakistan, who are facing another winter without adequate shelter after the devastating 7.6 magnitude earthquake that hit the region more than a year ago. About 80,000 lives were lost, 250,000 people were seriously injured, 10,000 children orphaned and 3.5 million people were left homeless.

PWS&D supported ACT programs which provided emergency supplies and more recently, is helping rebuild homes and restore livelihoods. However, less than 20 per cent of survivors have an earthquake-proof and permanent shelter and face a second winter ill-prepared. ACT is hoping to provide temporary shelters and food to about 2,000 households and shelter assistance to a further 5,000 this winter.

PWS&D's 2006-2007 educational resources are available to be ordered, free of charge, from the PCC Book Room. The resources include the 2005-2006 Annual Report, the Enough for All posters, placemats, bulletin covers, children's resource, envelopes, savings bank labels and worship resource, and the Something Extra booklet, available in 40- and eight-page versions. The resources can also be viewed online at www.presbycan.ca/pwsd/rescat.html or to fill out an order form visit www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd/resourceimages/bookorder2006-2007.pdf. – *PWS&D*

Historical record golden

PRESBYTERIAN HISTORY turns 50 this year, first published in March 1957. The bi-annual publication of the Committee on History has recounted the stories of Canadian Presbyterianism, including tales of how congregations got started, biographies of lay and ordained Presbyterians, and the role of Presbyterians in the history of Canada.

Distributed to every congregation through the PCPak, the publication has known three editors: Dr. John Johnston (1957-1961); Dr. T. Mel Bailey (1961-1989); and Peter Bush (1990-present). The late Dr. Bailey was also a contributing writer; as is well-known historian Dr. John Moir.

The publication seeks to be approachable for the average reader, while providing enough detail to engage specialists in the field. The publication's cover, while changing over the years, currently features a photograph of The Kirk, St. George's, New Brunswick, the oldest continuously worshiped-in Presbyterian building in the country.

Presbyterian History is also available through individual subscriptions.

Former Presbyterian MP highlights human rights

The Presbyterian Church has its very own ambitious, aggressive human rights activist in David Kilgour, a member of parliament from 1979 to 2006, who has advocated for global social justice and peace issues throughout his time in public office. On a recent 10-country European tour he drew attention to the alleged organ harvesting of Falun Gong prisoners in China. Along with human rights lawyer David Matas, Kilgour conducted a two month investigation into this practice, uncovering evidence that Falun Gong practitioners (a banned spiritual movement in China with about 70 million members and founded in 1992) are being wrongfully imprisoned, killed and harvested for their vital organs which are sold to local and foreign patients.

In an address to the United Nations, Kilgour said the organ harvesting victims' only crime "was to believe in 'truth, compassion and forbearance' in a totalitarian governance system in which opposing values prevail."

The Chinese government has discounted Kilgour's claims, saying the rumours have been spread by Falun Gong members who are eager to discredit the communist country. However, a recent statement by Chinese Vice Minister of Health Huang Jiefu admitted the Chinese regime has used organs from executed prisoners without consent.

Kilgour's report relies largely on the testimony of Falun Gong members living outside of China, but highlights several facts: official figures show that organ transplants rose from 18,500 between 1994 and 1999 to 60,000 between the years 2000 and 2005. Waiting lists for organ transplants are often only several weeks long—another statistic that Kilgour mentions when defending his argument.

Kilgour is also passionate about human rights issues in Vietnam, Rwanda, Uganda, and the genocide in Darfur, where more than 3.2 million people have been affected by the deadly three-year conflict, with about 400,000 murdered by the Janjaweed militia.

"I wish everyone at the UN Security Council could hear what was said about Sudan's rapes and mass murders several weeks ago at the mock tribunal," he said, referring to the gathering of human rights activists, lawyers and a Nobel laureate in November to discuss the actions of Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir. The meeting was held across the street from UN headquarters.

Since that meeting, the UN Human Rights Council agreed to dispatch a five-member mission to Darfur to assess the situation.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF WWW.DAVID-KILGOUR.COM



Kilgour with Xun Li and Lucy Zhou at a Falun Gong rally staged to call attention to human rights abuses in China against Falun Gong practitioners.

As a member of Westminster, Ottawa, Kilgour's faith is something he does not hide, and indeed, it informs his actions. He received an honorary Doctor of Divinity from Knox College last May.

"Like literally billions of others of faith around the planet, my spiritual hard- and software probably affect much of what I think and do everyday," Kilgour told the *Record*. "In the case of the terrible persecution faced by Falun Gong practitioners in China since mid-1999, for example, no Christian or person of any other faith can stand back and do nothing once we know what is really going on."

The Winnipeg native is a Fellow of the Study for Democracy at Queen's University, and a member of the board of the Council for the Community of Democracies. He recently helped organize the annual National Prayer Breakfast on Parliament Hill, bringing together participants from numerous faiths to celebrate religious harmony.

He is no stranger to standing up for what he believes and has suffered in the past because of it. In April 1987, Kilgour was dismissed as Parliamentary Secretary by then-Prime Minister Brian Mulroney for criticizing his government's ethics and its treatment of Western Canadians. Three years later, after voting against the Goods and Services Tax, he was expelled from the Conservative caucus. He briefly sat as an independent Progressive Conservative before joining the Liberal Party in 1991, and became an independent in 2005. He has traveled to 75 countries and was recently a member of the Canadian delegation to Rwanda in commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the genocide.

He considers his recent trip to Europe "a success in terms of raising awareness [of organ harvesting] among legislators, media, diplomats and the various publics." *–AM with files from www.david-kilgour.com*


Cynthia Chenard


Laurence DeWolfe


Hans Kouwenberg


Murdo Marple


David Phillips

Nominees for moderator speak up

Five nominees have been named for Moderator of the 2007 General Assembly. Ballots were sent to presbyteries in December for voting. The Committee to Advise the Moderator will count the ballots on April 2. The new moderator is to be officially elected at General Assembly, held in Waterloo, Ont., this year.

Rev. Dr. Cynthia Chenard, Iona, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

The daughter of missionaries, Chenard grew up in the Philippines, and was ordained in 1991. She served two Ontario congregations before moving to Iona in 1996, has acted as moderator of presbytery and synod, has been involved in youth initiatives and has sat on numerous committees. A police chaplain, Chenard was a front line pastoral presence during the Swissair tragedy.

"Our foundation, our formation of our faith and our reformed tradition are keys to growth as individuals and as a church. I believe we need to explore our identity, where we came from, what we stand for and why. In learning and re-educating ourselves in matters of faith and our calling as a denomination by God, we will be able to evaluate, celebrate, and risk in faith … It would be my hope that a focus on education would give us tools to better articulate to others who we are as we continue to serve God in ecumenical and inter-faith relationships, and who we are as Christians in the multifaceted world in which we live."

Rev. Dr. Laurence DeWolfe, Church of St. David, Halifax, Nova Scotia

Born in Nova Scotia, DeWolfe was ordained in 1983, and has served numerous congregations since that time. For the past seven years, he has taught Homiletics at the Atlantic School of Theology. DeWolfe has served as moderator of presbytery and synod, has been a member of various committees, has served as a military chaplain and was a member of the Knox College Senate. He now serves on the General Assembly's Committee on Theological Education.

"I have a special interest in training church leaders, and particularly in the education of our ministers. I'd like to focus on recruiting and nurturing leaders, and on pastoral care of candidates for ministry and their teachers … I'd also like to spend time with congregations like mine that are aging and declining, yet struggling faithfully to engage in local mission in authentic ways … I believe the greatest challenge we face is accepting our smallness. Accepting this doesn't mean admitting defeat. It does mean we have to look realistically at what we can do … We have to be clearer about what's most important, and agree to disagree among ourselves about some things that aren't as crucial to our mission as we may think. If we focus on kingdom values first, then other concerns will fall into place."

Rev. Dr. Hans Kouwenberg, Calvin, Abbotsford, British Columbia

Kouwenberg came to his current charge after 20 years at St. Giles', Prince George, and has served on a number of the church's national committees. He has been clerk and moderator of synod and presbytery, is currently convener of the Board of St. Andrew's Hall and a member of the Committee on Theological Education, and has been on the governing bodies of all three theological colleges. In 2005, the Presbyterian College awarded him an honorary doctorate. He has also acted as chaplain for the Royal Canadian Legion and for correctional services. He currently teaches literature at a Bible college in Abbotsford.

"I am passionate about the local church, the preaching-teaching ministry, and the pastorate—visiting and being among God's people. I have learned much about the power of a loving, compassionate congregation, full of faith, and with hope for the future. I am keen to share the little I have learned about what helps churches that are 'dying for change' become churches of the 21st century … I am committed to working with and enhancing the governance of the elders among us … It is the elders, elected by God's people, who can carry a congregation forward … I would like to help continue to lift up the things that provoke elders and other leaders in the church to better and greater service for our Lord."

Rev. Murdo Marple, Knox, Calgary, Alberta

Before settling in Calgary, Marple served on several summer mission fields, and three different pastoral charges. He has been moderator of presbytery and synod, and is currently clerk of Calgary-Macleod Presbytery. He has served on a number of committees at various levels and has been active in areas of social justice including being involved in the establishment of a local chapter of KAIROS in Calgary. Interest-

ed in inter-church relations, Marple is president of the Calgary Council of Churches and sits on Calgary's Muslim-Christian Dialogue.

"I see myself focusing on celebrating the contributions to ministry of the smaller congregations of the church... We all believe that these faithful communities have something to contribute to the church and we need to find ways to allow them to do so. I would also focus on the challenge to be the church in our present conflicted multi-cultural, multi-faith society and world ... We need to know who we are as Christians and how we can enter into meaningful dialogue with peoples of other faith expressions so that we can contribute to understanding and resolution of conflict rather than being sometimes the source and cause of the same."

David Phillips, elder, Knox, Uxbridge, Ontario

For the past two years, Phillips has acted as the church's Leading with Care coordinator, and has worked with more than 500 congregations. He is also convener of the Pickering Presbytery's Leading with Care Committee, and serves as clerk of session, teaches the adult Sunday school class and convenes the mission committee at Knox. Phillips taught high school for 34 years. He sits on numerous committees and in involved in various youth initiatives. He has led the Youth in Mission trip to Mistawasis First Nation Reserve in Saskatchewan for the past seven years. His focus as moderator would be education.

"Our strength is our people...Many congregations are doing some incredible work with very little publicity or fanfare. They are providing a real Christian presence in our communities. The challenge that we face is the need to communicate and share some of the many fine ideas and programs that are happening in our congregations. During my travels I have been fortunate to meet many Presbyterians; to learn from them and to have the opportunity to share what is working for them. We must work together, clergy and lay, rural and urban, large and small churches. We are all engaged in ministry."

For fuller biographies and more details about each nominee please visit our website.

"Let my heart be broken with the things that break the heart of God."



World Vision's founder, Bob Pierce, wrote those words on the flyleaf of his Bible almost 60 years ago. It was during the Korean War, and he was deeply moved by the suffering of the children he saw around him.

Back home, he couldn't forget the children. Motivated by Jesus' compassion toward them, he began recruiting friends to help. That's how World Vision was born.

Today, you can be a part of this great undertaking by helping to bring a needy child nourishing food, life-giving medicine, fresh, disease-free water and education for a future bright with promise.

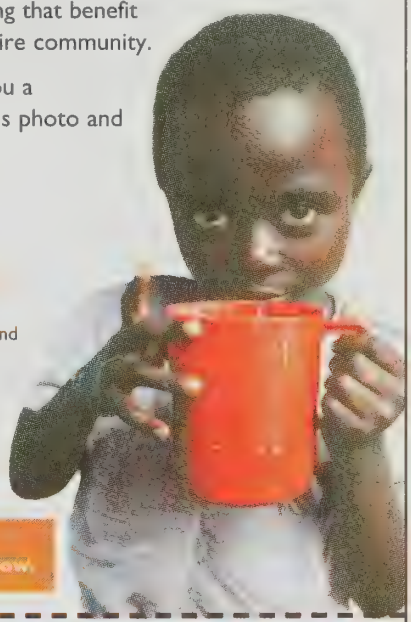
Your $35 monthly sponsorship will also help provide access to schools, clinics and skills such as agricultural training that benefit your sponsored child's family and the entire community.

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Or call 1 800 268-1650.

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Send my child's photo right away. I prefer to sponsor a: ☐ Boy ☐ Girl
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Top 10 stories of '06

ENI–The American Religious Newswriters Association held their annual poll in December to name the top religion news:

1. Muslims in a number of countries react violently to publication of cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad in Denmark and other European nations.

2. Pope Benedict XVI angers Muslims by including in a speech a centuries-old quote linking Islam and violence. He apologizes and smoothes the waters on a trip to Turkey.

3. The (U.S.) Episcopal Church riles conservatives when it elects as presiding bishop, Katharine Jefferts Schori, who supported the consecration of a gay bishop.

4. Charismatic leader Ted Haggard resigns from the National Association of Evangelicals and is dismissed as a pastor after allegations surface of gay sex and drug use.

5. American religious right candidates suffer defeats in the November elections, with many voters citing morality as one of their strongest motivators.

6. Religious voices grow louder for peace in Iraq.

7. The schoolhouse shooting deaths of five Amish girls draws international attention on the Amish community's ethic of forgiveness after some Amish attend the killer's funeral.

8. (tie) The release of the movie *The Da Vinci Code*.

8. (tie) Same-sex marriage bans pass in seven of eight U. S. states; meanwhile, New Jersey rules that same-sex couples can get the same benefits as married couples.

10. President George W. Bush casts his first veto to defeat a bill calling for expanded stem-cell research.

Fighting stalls work

ENI–Church officials say the resurgence of ethnic fighting in Sri Lanka has stalled the tsunami reconstruction. "The situation is very frustrating," said Rev. Jayasiri Peiris, general secretary of the National Christian Council of Sri Lanka.

"We have funds but unfortunately, we cannot help the needy people as we want to." More than 31,000 people were killed and more than half a million displaced by the 2004 tsunami.

For believers, by believers

ENI–Australia's religious communities have united to call for urgent action on climate change at a time when the country is facing its worst drought.

Common Belief: Australia's Faith Communities on Climate Change, spans religious differences, and includes Roman Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox and Evangelical traditions. Judaism, Islam and Aboriginal spirituality are also represented.

The privately-funded Climate Institute approached Australia's religious communities and they responded enthusiastically. "For most of us, the fate of the planet as a result of global warming is really a moral issue," Climate Institute CEO, Corin Millais said. "Here, for believers by believers, is the beginning of a dialogue."

For many of the churches the statement was an opportunity to reexamine the relationship between human beings and the earth. Historically, the creation story in Genesis has been used to justify environmental exploitation. Patrick Dodson, speaking for aboriginal people, wrote that Western society "tended to see nature as something that must be managed for its maximum capital exploitation, an asset of power and dominance".

Rev. George Browning, the Bishop of Canberra wrote: "Wilfully causing environmental degradation is a sin."

Several churches advocated the model of Christian stewardship saying, "As God's stewards we bear an ethical responsibility for the care of the Earth and the welfare of all living things."

Yet, not all religious leaders have embraced this project. In a speech earlier this year, Catholic archbishop of Sydney, George Pell, said that "pagan emptiness" motivated "hysteric and extreme claims" about global warming.

"There's a great level of enthusiasm out there in the faith community," said a spokesperson for the institute.

Apartheid crusader dies

ENI–Rev. Robert S. Bilheimer, an American Presbyterian minister who organized the first assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1948 and later was credited with helping turn South African theologian C. F. Beyers Naude into an opponent of apartheid, has died at age 89.

"Bob Bilheimer, who called himself an ecumenical engineer, was both an organizational genius and an inveterate provider and provoker of thought," the Minnesota-based Collegeville Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research, of which Bilheimer had been executive director, said in a tribute.

In 1960, Bilheimer was commissioned by the WCC to lead a "mission of fellowship through diplomacy" to South Africa, after the massacre of 69 black South Africans by the country's security forces at Sharpeville near Johannesburg shocked the world. The mission followed calls for South Africa's Dutch Reformed Churches to be expelled from the Geneva-based church grouping.

Then, in December 1960 Bilheimer helped organize a meeting with South African churches that ended with a statement rejecting apartheid. The following year the South African prime minister, Hendrik Verwoerd, demanded that the Afrikaner participants retract their agreement to the report of the consultation. All except Beyers Naude did so.

Soon afterwards, Naude was forced to resign from the ministry after being asked to choose between his church and his activism. "Naude always acknowledged that it was Bob Bilheimer who turned him around," said the Collegeville tribute.

Humanitarianism urged

ENI–Kenyan Archbishop Benjamin Nzimbi has urged his government to reconsider a decision to close its borders to refugees from neighbouring strife-torn Somalia. "At times of emergency, it is important to be humanitarian," said Nzimbi after the January announcement by the government that it was closing its border with Somalia and deporting refugees who had crossed to Kenya. "We should not allow them to remain where they will be killed," said Nzimbi.

Turning spirituality into addiction

Tobacco used to be sacred, not yet another symbol of society's excess

BY ANDREW FAIZ

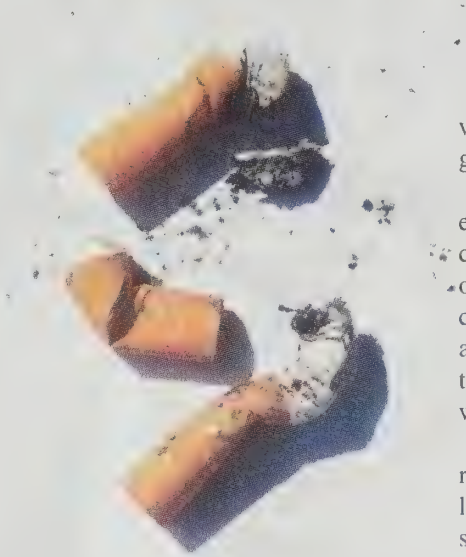
Smoking cigarettes, it is said in advertising and on pamphlets, is the most preventable cause of death. It's an absurd statement of course: there is no way to prevent death; unless you take the virgin birth route. And I wouldn't suggest anyone take that path too lightly, the responsibility is too heavy.

But, smoking does cause health issues, which are preventable—from cancers to cankers to respiratory conditions. It reduces the number of years you have to live and worse, makes the last few of those anguishing. According to Health Canada, over 45,000 Canadians die "from disease or illness caused by using tobacco and at least 1,000 are non-smokers.

"Cigarette smoke is the number one cause of visible indoor air pollution. Second-hand smoke exposes employees and customers to cancer-causing pollutants. It can also interact with other occupational hazards, further increasing the danger to health. Smoking costs the Canadian health care system approximately $3.5 billion every year."

Them's the stats and they are incontrovertible. Because of them, smoking is a major health initiative taken on by various levels of government: it is banned in public buildings, even in bars, in some parts of the country; it is heavily taxed to prevent affordability; smokers are often treated as pariahs, at public functions, in office environments and particularly at dinner parties.

Therefore I was shocked at a Native worship service held at church offices when tobacco was used as a spiritual and religious tool. I knew intellectually that tobacco was a spiritual instrument—much like wine and bread—in Native religions. But, culturally it is often a symbol of shame. Here, it was a cleansing agent. Everybody at the worship service cleansed himself or herself in the tobacco smoke.



That was a strange sensation: the raw tobacco used in the spiritual ceremony smells just like a lit cigarette. Shifting the association from addiction to spirituality was jarring. I watched as the assembled used both hands to waft the smoke over their face and over their body—of the thirty-plus gathered there was only one who was a smoker. I could tell by the slight tics on faces that their primary association with the smoke and the smell was as an addictive health hazard and not as an instrument of spiritual cleansing.

The Aboriginal Peoples who spanned North America never intended for tobacco to be a mass-produced public killer. Bob Newhart in his famous sketch makes the point as Sir Walter Raleigh introduces tobacco to British society. Raleigh explains that you roll the leaf, set it on fire and then stick the burning thing in your mouth. It's a tough sell, according to Newhart. (The sketch ends with Raleigh selling some beans, which are ground and then soaked in hot water. Apparently many people like to have the hot water beans and the burning leaves together in the morning.)

It is absurd, and yet this once sacred element has been turned into vulgar excess. That is what our society does best of all: convert everything to excess. Of course, we—you and I—are society; we are also community and consumer culture and church and nation. So, it is we who create excess.

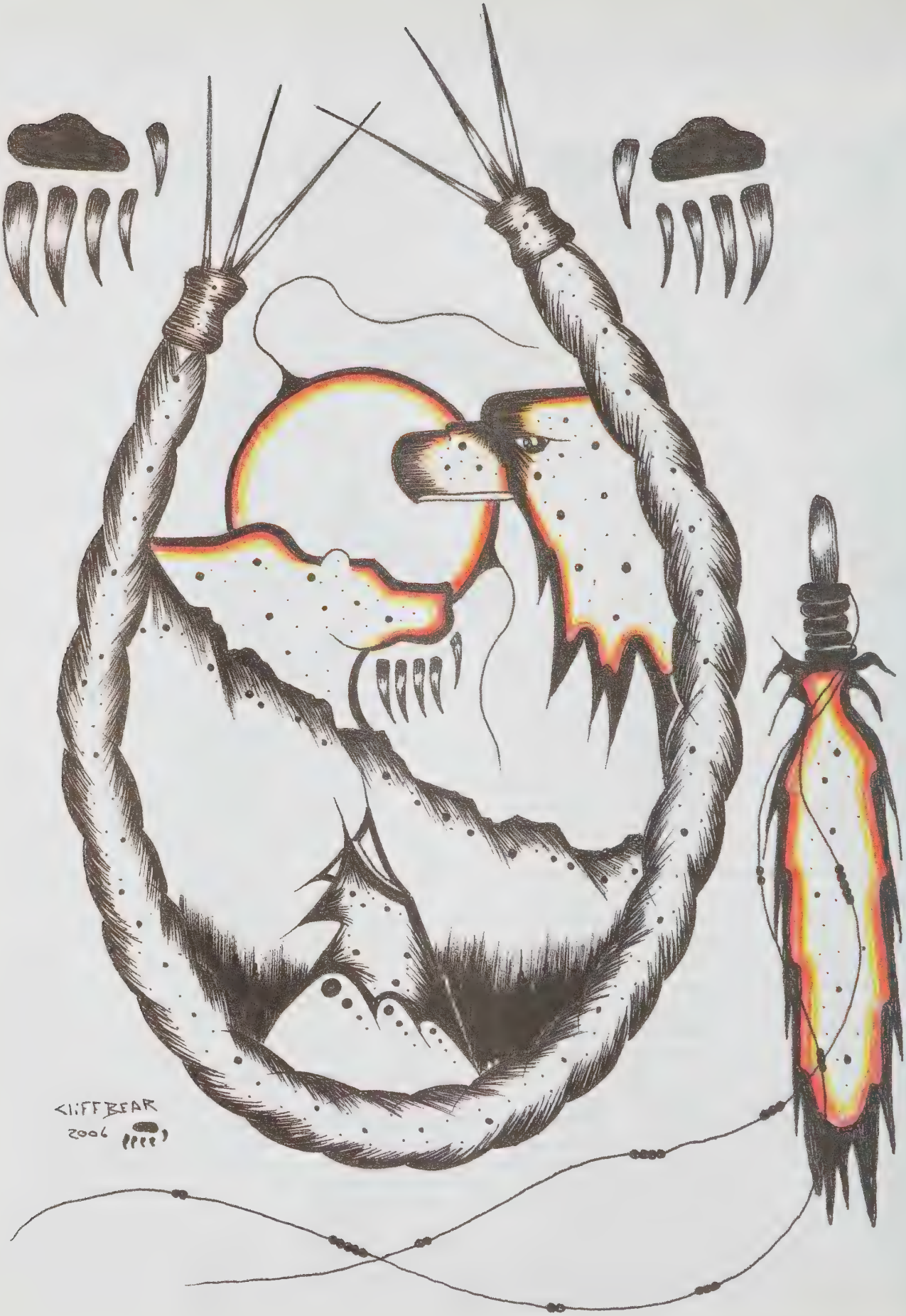
All that we consume has spiritual roots, whether it be coffee, salt, chocolate or love. But by becoming consumers, we forsake our spirituality. Spirituality demands contemplation, while consumption easily becomes indulgence in excess. And excess is the state in which most of us live.

Many disingenuously go on about how Native Canadians worshiped the land and worshiped all of its elements. I say disingenuously because we rarely bring that sensibility to our own lives. There is nothing in our theology that keeps us from spiritual contemplation. In fact, everything in our theology demands we clear the clutter of our excess and seek the roots to our spirituality.

And there's the rub: it is tough to clear the clutter, since there is so much of it. It is when we see the excess of our own lives—the hectic schedules, the unread magazines, the over flowing closets, the unopened bills and the dump-n-run garages, basements and attics—we see ourselves with greater clarity. We recognize, if ever briefly, in the passing seconds of our rushing agendas, how far we have slipped from our spiritual roots.

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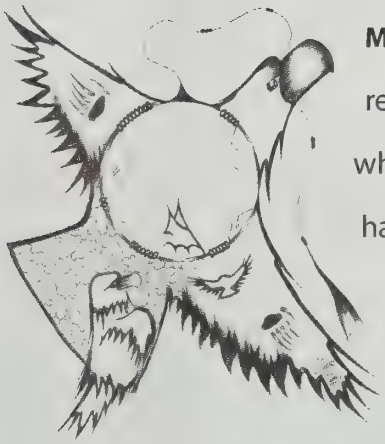
PHOTO: ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/HEIDI KRISTENSEN


CLIFF BEAR
2006

THE PATH TO HEALING

Sharing the pain of residential schools

By Amy MacLachlan



MOST PRESBYTERIANS have probably heard of native residential schools and the various abuses suffered by children who attended them. Most probably know their church had a hand in running the schools and has accepted responsibility for the abuses committed. But do you know about the church's native ministries and the work being done by the people on the front lines? Or how deep the wounds of residential schools are and how the abuse still affects people today?

Those working on the front lines believe few Presbyterians know what the church is doing among native communities in Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. They also believe church members have a duty to fulfill a responsibility to get involved and to build bridges between the church and Canada's First Nations Peoples. Did you know this was even a possibility? Well read on, because this special report aims to inform you, challenge you and maybe even surprise you. Hopefully, it will inspire you to take a step towards reconciliation with your aboriginal brothers and sisters.

A SPECIAL REPORT

ILLUSTRATIONS: CLIFF BEAR

They used to call him The Enforcer. With a steely gaze and a stockey 250-pound frame, he was his gang's go-to guy for persuading procrastinating narcotics clients to pay up. For 25 years, Lenny McKay usually got what he went for.

"I hurt people in a lot of ways," says the soft-spoken 45-year-old, whose family name turns up regularly in crime stories that appear in Winnipeg newspapers. "But the guilt caught up to me, and I'm trying to make up for it," adds McKay, a 'survivor' of a residential school in Manitoba.

McKay's road to recovery led him to the Anishinabe Fellowship Centre, located at the heart of Winnipeg's violent, largely native north end. The centre provides a food bank, meals, counselling, employment and housing help and regular Sunday worship. The centre has helped McKay, and others like him, turn his back on his bad boy ways.

"You're walking a fine line all your life" when you're in a gang, says McKay, his long black hair pulled into a ponytail. "The temptation is always there. It's the money, the lifestyle, the girls, the cars, the fame, people being afraid of you. It's the only way to get respect." Once, he was cracked over the head with a baseball bat, putting him in a coma for four days. "Every time I feel the pain from that, I think about what I was putting myself through."

When asked what he thinks about the church and its connection to residential schools, McKay, who says he's "not religious" has few words. "They will take the pain to their graves." But in his next breath, the man who now volunteers at Anishinabe acknowledges a debt to the church and, in particular, to the workers at the fellowship centre. "I know the church helps a lot of people. I would have been in prison or dead if I hadn't come here. It's like a refuge for me."

Anishinabe is one half of Winnipeg Inner City Mission: along with Flora House, which caters mostly to children and youth. Together, they are one of seven Presbyterian native missions dotting the Canadian map. The others are: Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry, Mistawasis Memorial Church located on a reserve near Prince Albert, Sask., Anamiewigummig or the Kenora Fellowship Centre, Edmonton Urban Native Ministry, Hummingbird Ministries in Vancouver and the Cariboo House Church Ministry in British Columbia.

As director of the Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry, Rev. Stewart Folster experiences the heartening breakthroughs and crushing breakdowns of doing life-altering outreach work that, despite its intrinsic value, still begs for funding and pleads for greater involvement on the part of non-Natives. Because of financial constraints, Folster basically runs a one-man show;



The Birtle Residential School, 1883 -1970.

PHOTOS: (BOTH PAGES) COURTESY OF PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA ARCHIVES

Timeline of aboriginal work in the PCC

1866 – Work begins among aboriginal peoples led by Rev. James Nisbet.

1875 – The Presbyterian Church in Canada is formed. In 1876, the Women's Foreign Mission Society begins and by 1883 resolves to focus on Aboriginal women and children.

1878 – Lucy Baker appointed as first woman missionary to aboriginals.

1883 – Birtle School opens in Manitoba.

1888 – WFMS is supporting nine schools. Birtle becomes a boarding school.

1902 – Cecilia Jeffrey School opens in Kenora, Ont., at the request of the band, and named after the first secretary of aboriginal work for the WFMS.

1908 – PCC teaching over 500 students.

1914 – The WFMS becomes the Women's Missionary Society. There are 21 centres of native mission work.

1920s – Eighty state-sponsored, church-run schools peak with more than 17,000 children.

1925 – Church Union occurs. The PCC now operates only Birtle and Cecilia Jeffrey.

1927 – The Mistawasis day school begins.



Playground, Cecilia Jeffrey School, c.1957

helped occasionally by volunteers and an aboriginal elder at Sunday worship and a Monday healing circle. Despite the potential for his healing ministry, his time is severely limited as he is often kept busy monitoring the centre's comings and goings.

Folster's strengths are relationships; his native heritage a big plus when it comes to building bridges between the church and angry aboriginals in downtown Saskatoon.

His calm demeanour, quiet voice and warm eyes hide his own history that includes alcohol abuse, a dysfunctional family, and a son who committed suicide in 2005. It is a life that could have ended badly; instead, he discovered native spirituality and the teachings of the elders, and the admonition to respect all people. "And the more I thought about it," says Folster, "I realized that the Bible was teaching me the same thing."

Having a foot in both worlds helps Folster in his ministry. "I know all about the stories," he says, sitting at a desk in his plain-walled, linoleum-floored office. "My grandparents went to residential schools, so I've suffered the effects of that through the generations. I know where they're coming from."

Residential schools were a joint venture of churches and the federal government beginning in the late 1800s. Indian and Inuit children were taken from their homes, far from parental influence and traditional ways, to be educated according to non-native standards. There are stories of wonderful teachers and missionaries who treated the students with respect and encouraged their education. But there are many other stories of horrific physical, emotional and sexual abuse suffered by young children, along with a steady erasure of language and culture that caused lingering trauma.

In a telling comment, prime minister Sir John A. Macdonald exposed the true intentions of residential schools when he wrote in 1887: "The great aim [is] to do away with the tribal system and assimilate the Indian people in all respects with inhabitants of the Dominion, as speedily as they are fit for the change." Debates rage over whether the attempt at assimilation was based on fear, ignorance or benevolence. Regardless, as hindsight shows, it didn't work.

"Their way of life was taken away," says Folster, "and then to have the churches come in and take their children in the middle of the night—some never saw their parents again until they were 16. The sad thing is the mandate for the schools was to educate native people, but they even failed at that.

"My grandfather was in the Catholic residential school at Fort Alexander, Manitoba," he explains. "I don't know exactly how they treated him there because he would not talk about it. I know that other students at that school were sexually abused. I do know that my grandfather developed an explosive temper which was like a person possessed by some kind of demon. My father was raised with that same uncontrollable, almost animal-like behaviour. When we misbehaved as children, my father would literally threaten our lives. I remember when my mother wanted to go to town, my father would reach for his rifle above the doorway and he would hold it against her head and all of my brothers and sisters and I would scream and cry until he put the gun down.

"I think we were affected emotionally, spiritually and mentally," continues Folster, as his dark eyes settle on the passers-by beyond his street-front office window. "I have problems with relationships and with learning to love people and I don't know how to be affectionate and affirming. I had to go to coun-

1957 – Staff at Birtle totals 20 and enrollment is at 164. At Cecilia Jeffrey, staff totals 24 and enrollment is 150.

1960-70s – The church advocates for aboriginal rights, including urging the federal government to provide full citizenship for aboriginals. In 1975, assembly expresses the need for the whole church to sensitize its self to the concerns of natives.

1964 – The Kenora Fellowship Centre and the Prince Albert Fellowship House open.

1968 – The Winnipeg Fellowship House (now Anishanabe Fellowship) opens.

1970 – Birtle School closes.

1970s – The PCC joins an ecumenical coalition on northern Native concerns.

1976 – Cecilia Jeffrey School closes.

1979 – Prince Albert Fellowship House for Boys closes.

1980s – Stories of abuse at residential schools begin to percolate.

1986/87 – Board of World Mission undertakes a study on aboriginal issues.

1987 – "A New Covenant: Towards the Constitutional Recognition and Protection of Aboriginal Self-Government in Canada" is signed by leaders of various Canadian churches.

1989/90 – Former non-PCC residential schools staff are convicted of sexual assault in B.C. and the Yukon.

'I have never called the residential school experience a legacy. It was a human venture and an attempt to educate people and it went terribly, terribly wrong and my people are now dying because of it'

seling to deal with my own explosive temper. It was the way I learned to deal with things as a child.

"I have never called the residential school experience a legacy. I think it was a human venture and an attempt to educate people and it went terribly, terribly wrong and my people are now dying because of it."

In Kenora, Ont., 95 per cent of people living on the streets are residential school survivors. The small town, whose population swells in the summer when vacationers and wealthy cottagers flock to its shores, is surrounded by reservations and still houses a remaining building from the Presbyterian Church's Cecilia Jeffrey Residential School.

On this cool May evening, the town's aboriginal community has gathered at the Ne-Chee Friendship Centre for the annual spring feast. Men beat on a large drum and sing traditional songs, women dance in jingle dresses, and a prayer of thanksgiving is offered to the Creator before dinner is served.

After a meal of battered fish, wild rice, berries and bannock, Jim Chicago, a residential school survivor who is now actively involved in homelessness initiatives in Kenora, sits down and tells his story. "Churches should teach their parishioners that it happened, and let them start their healing," he says. Others in the room nod at the remembrance of being beaten for crying, and not knowing their own mother as they stepped off the train after finally being allowed to come home.

While he is speaking, Chicago's son wanders into the room. He is welcomed warmly, and is encouraged to sit down and listen to the discussion. It is in such circles—sitting amongst older family and friends while they talk about the past—where the next generation learns its most valuable lessons.

"What should churches do?" asks Chicago. "One word: nothing. Let natives do their own thing, practice their own ways. If the churches and government had allowed us to be 'savages' and 'Indians' then we'd still be here; we'd be allowed to practice our traditional ways."

Whether it's here in Kenora or at Folster's mission in Saskatoon, many of the church's native ministries are struggling to keep their doors open. The issue is most often money, and many of those currently working in the church's aboriginal missions are frustrated that the Presbyterian Church seems to be shifting its focus away from their work.

"People on the front line see a crying need, and are wondering why the church is deliberately choosing to channel those resources to somewhere other than their ministries," said Rev. George Yando, minister at Mistawasis, just outside of Prince Albert. "What would be wrong with channeling them through existing ministries? No one has given us a good answer.

"The national church gives a stipend and puts people there, but they're not given any tools. How do you make bricks with no straw?"

Just how much support the church gives is an issue that has drawn increasing criticism. The last two General Assemblies heard lengthy debates on the church's priorities when it comes to native ministries, with many commissioners calling for increased support.

The fuel that is firing the current debate is the church's new healing and reconciliation program called Walking Together—devised to help forge relationships between Presbyterian parishioners and aboriginal people following the fall-out from Indian residential schools. The idea originated with the Healing and Reconciliation Program Design Team and was approved by assembly last June.

1989 – A report, which includes the formation of the National Native Ministries Committee, is submitted to assembly.

1990 – The PCC joins Project North's successor, the Aboriginal Rights Coalition.

1991 – A report to assembly notes that justice, peace and truth are required for aboriginal rights issues.

1992 – Chiefs and leaders of B.C.'s First Nations call for churches and government to be held responsible for schools.

1993 – The Residential School Working Group is appointed.

1994 – The General Assembly adopts The Confession of the Presbyterian Church for its role in residential schools.

1996 – The last federally-run residential school in Canada closes.

January 8, 1998 – The Canadian government apologizes to the country's 1.5 million Indigenous Peoples for mistreatment and cultural assimilation.

1998 – The Journey to Wholeness campaign is launched. The church raises more than $280,000 and distributes through an application process.

August 1998 – The first statement of claim related to residential schools is filed against the PCC.

2002 – The Presbyterian Church organizes a reunion for the former staff of its residential schools. Only one third of those invited show up.

The new program earmarked $400,000 for new initiatives and a one-year contract position for an animator who will help congregations and individuals reach out to aboriginal people and establish lasting relationships. Some of the PCC's native ministry personnel have called the animator's position "a hideous waste" of money, believing they could have put the money to better use in their under-funded and often understaffed programs and could play an integral role in involving congregations in their work.



For its part, the church says it can't do any more. Gordon Haynes, associate secretary for Canada Ministries (the department responsible for funding native missions), said native ministries already receive nearly 23 per cent of the budget, making it the department's second-largest area of funding. And unless donations to Presbyterians Sharing increase, the amount given to native ministries will remain the same.

"I'm frustrated by hearing complaints of there being no money," says Haynes, who wishes the church's native ministries could do more to promote the good work they do. "The needs are out there," he admits, "but we also have to start new churches, fund inner-city missions and chaplaincies. I don't disagree with them, but we see it from different sides."

The funds the ministries do receive are used to cover minister/director stipends, housing, rent and other incidental costs. The rest, said Haynes, has to fall to each ministry's board of directors, which should be staffed by people with fundraising interests who can find creative ways to drum up donations, government funding and congregational support. This policy is the same for other non-congregational missions supported by the department.

Aside from occasional grants for special projects and covering some expenses when directors go on deputation, Haynes says regular funding is based on personnel employed by the ministry, with grants covering anywhere from one to four people. He noted that presbyteries and synods should "take responsibility" in supporting and directing the missions that are within their bounds. Right now, he says, support varies, with some presbyteries giving money, others with members who sit on the ministries' boards of directors, and still others that have all but forgotten about their native ministries.

"Some are small and are overwhelmed," says Haynes, "some have other priorities; others may not know how to do it. Fundraising is a new thing for presbyteries. There are different issues in different places."

While those involved continue to wrestle over finances and responsibility, and congregations remain painfully slow to get involved, the people who rely on the ministries continue to struggle. One thing everyone seems to agree on is that helping aboriginal people along their healing journeys should be less about guilt or pitying those who attended residential schools, and more about what Christians are simply called to do.

"There are some very wounded people out there," admits Haynes. "There is more need out there than the Presbyterian Church can ever hope to answer. The question is, what can we do and how can we do it well?"

"I want to hold the church to the last sentence of its residential schools confession: the part that speaks of walking together," says Rev. Margaret Mullin, Anishinabe's director, who accepts that the church has limited funds to give, but is frustrated by the new Healing and Reconciliation program. "Where is this happening?"

ILLUSTRATION: JOHNNY MARCELAND

November 2002 – Assembly Council approves a Residential Schools Resolution Fund worth $500,000.

February 13, 2003 – The Presbyterian Church in Canada and the federal government sign a settlement agreement: the church will contribute $2.1-million to a fund, from which compensation for valid claims of abuse will be paid. The church will cover 30 per cent of compensation payments, while the federal government will pay the rest. The church has a total of 246 cases against it.

June 2003 – A Residential Schools Healing and Reconciliation Program Fund, also worth $500,000, is approved for education, as well as healing and reconciliation.

June 2004 – The Residential Schools Working Group is dissolved. The Healing and Reconciliation Task Force formally takes its place. Its foundational statement is: "Healing between aboriginal people and people of the church can only be achieved through building ongoing relationships based on awareness, understanding and trust."

General Assembly names the Sunday before June 21st each year Aboriginal Day within congregations, beginning in 2005.

June 2005 – General Assembly debates the church's native ministries, and directs the church to focus on healing and reconciliation in every department at the national offices.

The Healing and Reconciliation Task Force is formally dissolved. The team had spent the last year working on a national



Ruth Canada sings during Sunday worship at Anishinabe Fellowship Centre, Winnipeg.

With the Ojibway name Thundering Eagle Woman, Mullin devotes endless hours to her ministry. Anishinabe regulars call her Reverend Margaret and those she's particularly close with call her Mom. With Ojibway blood on her mother's side, she has only recently begun to rediscover and re-claim her aboriginal heritage; something that was all but ignored when she was growing up. Her new-found pride for her traditions, customs, and her people has given Mullin the motivation to do all she can for the enhancement of her ministry.

And she is seeing the fruits of her persistent efforts. Outspoken and assertive, Mullin has been knocking on doors, writing letters and making phone calls to find alternative sources of funding for Winnipeg Inner City Mission, which was incorporated in 2003 as an umbrella organization representing Anishinabe and Flora House. Because of her ingenuity, the ministry has been able to increase their staff and programming. Her funding strategies have also made possible the $2.3-million Anishinabe Place of Hope, which will provide 20 housing units for single people ages 30 to 50 who have committed to changing their lives. It is to be completed in June.

"I haven't given up on the church," said Mullin, who mentions the outreach WICM often receives from nearby congregations. "All of this stuff is really good and needed. But," she adds, tears forming, "people are dying out here. The people I love don't have time for the church to catch up."

Mullin's desire to "walk together" is what the PCC's new healing and reconciliation program is about—congregations and individuals being educated and given the tools to reach out, step out and make real connections with aboriginals in their communities.

This is what Lori Ransom is hoping for anyway. She's the person chosen to assume the new animator position, which falls under the church's Justice Ministries. She is a member of the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation, worked for Indian and Northern Affairs before joining the national office and is an elder at St. Andrew's, King Street, Toronto. This combination allows her to see the issues from various points of view. "I've had a few conversations with Lori, and I have the sense she wants to be sensitive to the issues," said Shannon Bell-Wyminga, a minister with the Cariboo House Church Ministry.

Ransom sympathizes with the frustrations of her detractors, and is confident things will end well. "I'm not sure how much the average person in the pew knows about our native ministries," she says, "and it is one of my hopes that with the increasing emphasis that the church as a whole is putting on aboriginal issues, it will lead to a greater understanding of what we're doing in our native ministries. It's not sufficient to just

Story continues on page 31

strategy for engaging congregations in the healing process with aboriginals. Continuing where the original team left off, the newly formed Healing and Reconciliation Program Design Team will work on creating a national program.

November 2005 – The federal government approves a $1.9-billion settlement package that provides a common experience payment to all former students of Indian residential schools. Each student is to receive $10,000, plus $3,000 for every year of attendance. Advance payment will be given to former students over the age of 65.

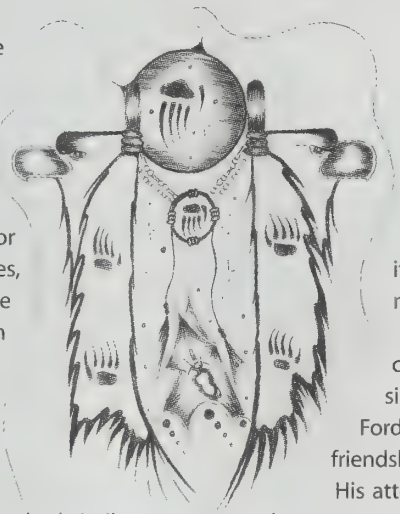
November 2005 – Assembly Council finds that unless givings to Presbyterians Sharing increase (and Canada Ministries' budget does likewise), the church is unable to devote more funds to native ministries, without jeopardizing existing programs.

March 2006 – Assembly Council approves Walking Together—a new healing and reconciliation initiative developed by the Healing and Reconciliation Program Design Team. The team was guided by the idea that this will be a long-term, ongoing journey, with projects fostered at the local level and ideally involving youth. The new program includes a possible Ten Days Tour across Canada to visit native ministries, a new "animator" position under contract for one year, and a new H&R consultative committee. Its work finished, the design team is disbanded. The program will use the remaining $400,000 (approx.) from the Healing and Reconciliation Fund adopted by the General Assembly in 2003, for this work.

Building relationships

Proving it can be done

"What we need is to find a way that we can offer all of these programs in one place," said Rev. Stewart Folster, who became the PCC's first Native minister when he was ordained in 1996. He is currently the director of Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry. "We need a healing centre in all major centres of Canada that offers addiction services, parenting and life skills, Native spirituality, Bible study, shelter, worship, child care, help with education and employment, with Native elders on staff as well as counsellors, therapists, parish social workers, and native artists to help in therapy. It needs government, church and aboriginal cooperation."



The Healing and Reconciliation Design team had similar ambitions when it brought its plan to Assembly Council back in 2005. It turned out the team was beyond its mandate to suggest such a project, and was dreaming too big when it came to the huge sums of money needed to get such an idea off the ground.

Rev. Ken Stright, who has contributed to various native ministry committees of the PCC and ecumenically in Atlantic Canada as well as being a former minister to the Waywayseecappo First Nation reserve in Manitoba, explained that the church's newest healing and reconciliation initiative has a different focus—one that targets non-aboriginals and preparing them for making connections with the native community.

"I want people talking, so that aboriginals are no longer nameless and faceless," said Stright. "Suddenly, all the issues are no longer government issues. It's about a person."

He said Presbyterians have been open and willing to take steps in the past along the journey of healing and reconciliation, noting that when the church's confession to Aboriginal Peoples was first brought to the General Assembly in 1992, it was sent back because the language wasn't strong enough. Stright pins his hopes on this openness for the success of the newest initiative.

"Any Presbyterian in nearly any community in this country can walk down the street and find a friendship centre. Anyone can walk in and say they want to learn, and ask if anyone will talk to them. It's not easy, but it's not impossible."

Lew Ford did exactly that. A member of the church's various healing and reconciliation teams since 2003 and a regular at Doon, Kitchener, Ont., Ford figured he'd better lead by example by visiting a friendship centre in his hometown.

His attempt was successful, as he was welcomed into the centre and was able to arrange a time to speak with some elders. The learning began and Ford hasn't been the same since. He's looking forward to the fruits of the church's new program, including the animator position, noting that church members need to be educated and sensitized to aboriginal issues, customs and culture before attempting to build relationships. Knowing the differences that exist, he said, will help avoid cultural missteps.

"The need for healing of aboriginal people is not to be diminished in any way," said Ford. "But this little bit of money and the resources that are available, rather than divide it, we're putting it towards changing the knowledge and understanding and involvement of non-aboriginal people. If we do that, these other needs will be addressed.

"It's not about blame or guilt, but understanding why we had such a profound effect on our aboriginal brothers and sisters."

Ford still has hope for the national centre that his design team proposed in 2005. "I think it's still in the picture, down the road," he said. "If interest in the church grows, we can do all kinds of things. We're only limited by our creativity." -- *AM*

ILLUSTRATION: CLIFF BEAR

April 2006 – Thanks to an agreement between the federal government and Roman Catholic entities regarding residential school settlements that was more favourable than the agreement with the PCC, the church has its cap for compensation dropped from $2.1 million to $1.32 million. Any funds saved will go towards other healing and reconciliation endeavours, such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

June 2006 – General Assembly adopts Walking Together. It also designates the Sunday before May 26 as Healing and Reconciliation Sunday.

September 2006 – Lori Ransom, a member of the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation and elder at St. Andrew's, King Street, Toronto, is hired on a one-year contract as the church's new healing and reconciliation animator.

December 15, 2006 – Provincial judges approve the overall settlement agreement for former students of residential schools worth more than $4-billion. The agreement provides a common experience payment totaling $1.9-billion for all students, additional compensation for specific acts of abuse, provision for commemorative events that support the healing process and initiates a $60-million Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which is a joint venture of government, churches and First Nations.

Native Ministries

A home at Anishinabe



Church and government representatives gathered for the sod-turning of Anishinabe Place of Hope last November.

When Frehley McKay died last year in a gang war, no one wanted to host the funeral, fearing retaliation from McKay's gang rivals. With nowhere for friends and family to gather, nowhere to lay the coffin for its last rites, the people of Anishinabe Fellowship Centre stepped forward, offering the centre as the place where the 22-year-old's loved ones would say farewell. Police in bullet-proof vests camped out at each corner to ensure no more violence ensued.

At Sunday worship last May, Rev. Margaret Mullin, who boasts Ojibway heritage on her mother's side, speaks to the congregation about a young man named Davey who committed suicide the Friday before. "So many lives are wasted because they run out of hope and they can't do it any longer," she begins. "You never know what's going to happen to those you love. Have you hugged your children today? Have you told them you love them?"

Run by Mullin, along with committed staff and volunteers who make the numerous programs and activities run smoothly, Anishinabe is part of the Winnipeg Inner City Mission along with its partner, Flora House. It is literally a refuge in this dangerous corner of north Winnipeg. Sunday worship—held at 3:30 p.m. and followed by a warm meal—must end well before dark, since the streets aren't safe to walk when the sun goes down.

It is from the desire to offer an escape from the lure of the street that the impetus to build an addition came.

Transitional housing, offered to single people who have made a commitment to life change, is expected to open in June and was made possible through an ambitious plan which secured funding from government, non-profits, churches and individual donors.

Mullin hopes the new apartments will further the centre's ministry and provide lasting healing for residents. Rent will be geared to income, and residents will be expected to work at the centre for six hours each week, making the building their own.

"It all starts with coffee and conversation," said Mullin. "And as relationships develop, we learn of the challenges in their lives and help them through those challenges, whatever they are."

Blessing the children at Flora

In the north end of Winnipeg, the aboriginal population—many of them poor, homeless, hurting—continues to grow. Drugs are rampant, violence is a constant threat, and absent or addicted parents fail to provide a warm and positive environment for their children. Enter Flora House.

Established in 1962 as a vacation Bible school and later a ministry to women and children, it still caters mainly to children and youth (though it also offers a much-needed food bank and several other adult programs). Kids come here for recreation, computer use, special outings, Sunday school, play time and an after-school skills-based program. Run by Warren Whittaker, who has been at the centre for 27 years, the small building on Flora Ave. has come to symbolize education, activity and a positive example.

"We're trying to promote a 'hands up' not a 'hand out' mentality," said Whittaker, a diaconal minister. "We're not overt in our expression of faith. It's about Luke 4—feed the poor and proclaim liberty. We work alongside people."

On a sunny Monday in May, about 20 kids gather at the centre and head out to the local school to play soccer. Here they not only engage in some friendly competition, but learn how to respect each other, solve minor problems, learn the importance of physical activity, and receive praise and encouragement, all of which are often lacking in their homes.

Roberta Bartolo has been on staff at Flora House since 1994. Athletic and outgoing, she's the perfect fit for the after-



Billy West, a 20 year volunteer, helps get food ready for Flora House's food bank in Winnipeg. Much of the food is donated by local stores and manufacturers.

school program, which currently receives funding from the Royal Bank. She's comfortable in this setting; being from Kenora, Ont., she has worked extensively with aboriginals.

"Some families have it together. They come early to pick up their kids, they have jobs, they're still married. Others have addictions. The kids see everything—hookers, drinking mouthwash. You don't have to protect them. The kids tell us about it."

As the kids walk back to the centre, they are laughing and shouting. Some of the girls walk hand-in-hand, seemingly oblivious to their surroundings. Dilapidated houses with windows smashed, doors hanging off the hinges, gang symbols painted on walls, rickety fences and choking weeds; a once-decent, working-class neighbourhood overtaken by drug dealers, slum landlords and gangs.

"People do come back and say, 'Look at my children now' or 'If it wasn't for you,'" said Whittaker, smiling at what must be vivid memories. "There are challenges, but you do see successes, and you treasure those."

Community in Kenora

Last January, a rotting old building used for low-rent apartments in Kenora, Ont., was destroyed by fire. Forty tenants were left homeless, their few belongings ruined. With nowhere else to go, they made their way to Anamiewigummig, or the Kenora Fellowship Centre, the town's only overnight emergency shelter, where they can find coffee and a warm meal, comfy couches with a view of pristine waters, company from the resident pet turtle, and most importantly, someone to talk to about their problems.



A young boy showcases his native culture by dressing in traditional regalia for Kenora's spring fest.

On this day, a sunny but chilly afternoon in May, the men from the burned apartment building are gathered for a meeting to help them figure out where to go next. The centre's stalwart caregiver Doris Horne—whom many of the men call mom—is on hand as always

"Doris is a good lady, keeping us here because we have no place to go," said one man.

"Doris helped us out. She gave us coffee, doughnuts and respect," said another.

It is for such care that these people come. Tales of living on the street or in fetid apartments, of drunken nights spent in the town's detox centre, of addiction, of loss, of poverty are all too common. Horne herself, who recently retired from the centre, has wrestled with a troubled past, losing her mother at a young age, growing up with a distant and alcoholic father, and later experiencing abuse at the hands of an alcoholic husband. Now 72, she found healing at the centre, where the people she serves have become her family.

"They're so special," said Horne. "They're kind. They're good—and most people don't see that. I love them all so much."

The centre's regular Sunday worship service attracts a small but devoted crowd; ditto for the weekly Bible study. Henry Hildebrandt, who has led the centre for the past 15 years, and all the workers are part of the community. They are invited to aboriginal feasts and celebrations, are honoured with gifts, and are greeted warmly on the street.

"It's a ministry that's based on building relationships and trust," said Hildebrandt of the mission that began in 1964. "That seems to me to be one of the essential aspects of the ministry of Jesus. He reached out to those who weren't part of the dominant society."

Back at the centre, the meeting has dispersed. It is still unclear whether the men will receive any compensation for their loss. For now, they have Anamiewigummig to settle into at night.

"They're just like me and you," said Horne. "We're all alike. Little do we know how much."

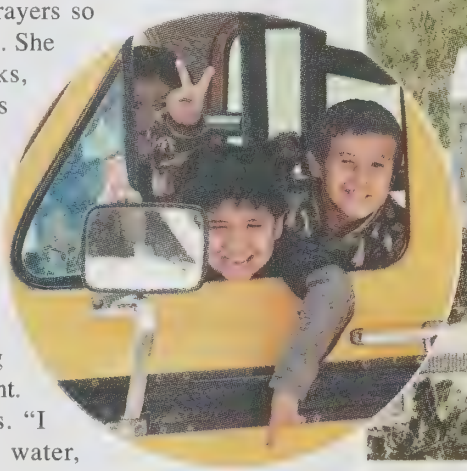
PHOTOS: AMY MACLACHLAN

Communion in Mistawasis

On Sunday morning, Rev. George Yando drives his van past two houses, picking up people who can't drive to the reserve on their own. Seated comfortably, the three elderly men and women talk candidly, laughing about their week and the rutted road that takes them to the small white church on the Mistawasis reserve.

As the group talks, their views on the church, on native customs, on their heritage, begin to surface.

Mabel Pechawis attended a residential school for four years. Her brothers did the same—one didn't come home alive, dying of meningitis. She tells tales of working long hours in the kitchen under an abusive cook, of not getting enough food to eat, of making her sisters rehearse proper Christian prayers so as not to upset their teachers. She laughs lightly as she speaks, the lines around her eyes deepening.



Despite her school experience, Pechawis is fiercely loyal to her church. When asked if native spirituality should be introduced at Sunday worship—something Yando would be willing to do if asked—she is adamant. "Definitely not!" she says. "I have communion and holy water, and that's enough."

Lilian Semaganis is also a firm believer. But when asked the same question, she takes a more moderate approach. "Everyone has different views," she admits, noting that Christian customs and native spirituality can work together. "God, Creator, Great Spirit. It's all the same."

The century-old Mistawasis church is a unique native ministry in the PCC. Instead of the food banks, homeless shelters and drop-in centres that characterize the other missions, Mistawasis largely ministers to the converted—to parents who bring their kids to Sunday service and to seniors who harbour a deep allegiance to the church.

A day earlier, the van stopped at another home—this time on the reserve—belonging to a church elder. Harvey Pechawis, a Plains Cree, has been a member of the congregation for 15 years and is Mabel's brother.

In his yard sits an old, fixed-up school bus, which Pechawis uses to take kids to church each Sunday. Inside, tea is quickly brewed and biscuits offered. The silver-haired Pechawis soon reveals his feelings. "It's not like 35 years ago, when everyone went to church," he said. "Numbers are down because of more traditional native spirituality. It takes them away from church."



Left: Children on the Mistawasis reserve wait to be bussed back home after attending Sunday worship at the small Mistawasis Memorial Church. Above: Chief Mistawasis, who welcomed the PCC's Rev. John Mackay in 1879 is buried on the reserve, beside the Mistawasis Church, seen in the background.

However, he seems to mourn the division between the traditions. "There's so much confusion," he said. "There's no understanding between the two. It's sad and unfortunate."

Relating in Saskatoon

The scene is nothing new for Rev. Stewart Folster. On the street outside his small downtown Saskatoon location, the blue and red lights of a police car are flashing once again. Some sort of physical altercation has just taken place; apparently a scruffy-looking man struck a woman as she walked past him and his dog. Various versions of the story are fed to the officer; the man denies the charges. A crowd gathers.

Folster watches the scene through his office's floor-to-ceiling street-front window. He chuckles to himself, mentioning the frequency of the flashing lights. "I watch drug deals going down right outside my window," he says. "These are people who are struggling to find out where their next meal



Rev. Stewart Folster

is going to come from."

Drug dealers and users, prostitutes, pimps, thieves, alcoholics. Ministering to such people is simply part of the job at the Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry. Ordained in 1996, Folster was the first aboriginal minister in the PCC. The mission has been at its new location—in the heart of Saskatoon's down-and-out district—for almost two years, after moving from Circle West Presbyterian Church and its increasingly middle-class neighbourhood.

Much to the chagrin of his wife, who sometimes worries about his safety, Folster works here mostly by himself. He has various volunteers who help occasionally, but day in, day out, it is Folster who is here. Brewing coffee and making hot chocolate; offering sandwiches, an aging couch to rest tired feet, a warm room to come in from the cold, a listening ear for serious problems.

It is this latter gift—the forging of relationships—that Folster wishes he could do more of. But as only one person, much of his efforts are needed to merely record who comes and goes and dissipate any aggression that walks through the door.

"I have people who are very angry at the church because of residential schools," he says, "so I try to approach it from the native, traditional side of things. I make them see they have a beautiful culture, and I invite them to the healing circle. I show them there is such a thing as the love of Christ."

The crowd outside disperses. The police officer gets in his car and drives away. Folster turns back to his paperwork.

"People from all walks of life are here, native and non-native," he says. "Poverty doesn't discriminate. We all have problems and we all need help, and I'm here helping them."



Mary Fontaine on the banks of Frances Point on the Sunshine Coast, B.C., following a renewal of marriage vows ceremony.

PHOTOS: (TOP AND OPPOSITE PAGE) AMY MACLACHLAN; (BOTTOM) COURTESY OF MARY FONTAINE

Hope at Hummingbird

Mary Fontaine had been preparing for her Hummingbird Ministries since she was a little girl. Growing up on the Mistawasis reserve in Saskatchewan, her late parents instilled in her a love for the church, as well as respect for traditional native ways.

"My passion for the political and social healing of my people came from my dad who told me about the oppression and suffering of our people," said Fontaine. "He believed in me and my God-given ability to learn. He said I could become educated and travel so that one day, I could help my people in some way. Hummingbird Ministries has become the way."

It was her mother, a devoted Presbyterian (the Mistawasis reserve was first visited by Rev. John MacKay back in 1879), who taught Fontaine about the church. "My passion for spiritual and emotional healing comes from my mother, who loved Jesus but who also honored the culture to which the Lord had sent her to," she began. "For my mother, the Lord was as present at the Sun dance as he was at the church she loved."

Fontaine fulfilled her father's wishes when she received her Master of Divinity from the Vancouver School of Theology, and began Hummingbird in 2004, thanks to a group from the Women's Missionary Society who believed her work was "too important not to do." The ministry was formalized by the PCC in 2005, when it was first funded for a six-month pilot project through Canada Ministries, the Synod of British Columbia and the Presbytery of Westminster.

The goal of the ministry is to encourage healing, build bridges between aboriginal and non-aboriginal people, and to instill sacred values of the First Nations culture in the hearts and minds of all people.

"The PCC has an opportunity to demonstrate genuine love, trust and acceptance of aboriginal people," said Fontaine. "The various healing circle ministries offer aboriginals an opportunity to identify their own healing needs, and the church has an opportunity to respond to those needs."

Fontaine conducts healing circles on various First Nations reserves, in churches and with community organizations. She hopes to work more closely with young people, and is currently on the Pathways Advisory Committee in Richmond, B.C., which is seek-

ing out aboriginal athletes for the Native American Indigenous Games in Duncan, B.C. in 2008. She hopes to encourage youth to rediscover and reclaim their cultural heritage as well as be open to the church.

"I can tell people are being helped by the things that are shared at circles, and what people say that the circle is doing for them," she said. "It's also the tears that are shed and the joy that is shared.

"I hope the fear and confusion about aboriginal cultures will diminish for both the church and aboriginal people."

Many flavours at Cariboo

When they got the call to go to the remote Cariboo-Chilcotin region of British Columbia, they hesitated. Rev. Shannon Bell-Wyminga and her husband Rev. Jon Wyminga had always thought they were destined for ministry in the inner city. Instead, they got dense bush, deep snow and long drives between house churches.

But once they began working with the Cariboo House Church Mission, it didn't take long to get attached. And after moving there in 1994, they felt the call growing stronger to focus their work on native people.

"Our hearts were pulled to that community," said Bell-Wyminga. "We went and we fell in love. We got to know the people and they captured our hearts."

The ministry was begun by Rev. David and Linda Webber in 1989, based out of Lac La Hache, B.C. It was to be the only Presbyterian presence within its bounds, which covers 87,000 square kilometres. Soon a vacation Bible school began on a reserve, and later a house church was planted. When Bell-Wyminga arrived, she started a crafts and prayer program with the women on the reserve, and once she got to know the moms, she was hooked.



Children play together on the Nazko Reserve in British Columbia —one of the sites of the Cariboo House Church Ministry.

The desire to be part of the community led the husband-and-wife team to move within a stone's throw of the Nazko First Nations Reserve, where their ministry is focused on the Southern Carrier people.

"This is a ministry of presence, of being the incarnation of Christ among the people here. Everybody knows each other. This place has become our home and these people have become our family."

A new vision statement for the next five years is the first time the mission has recognized a specific native focus. Rev. Charles McNeil, who joined the team in 2003, concentrates on more traditional community ministry in Lac La Hache, and the Webbers maintain their commitment to building house churches in remote areas.

"The reason for house churches is that we're in areas where there aren't enough people to warrant a building," said Bell-Wyminga. "We gather regardless of background or faith. We create a worshipping body within the community, and then build the community around that. It's very intimate."

At a typical house church, the congregation usually sits in a circle, uses a unique, personalized song book, and follows a more experiential format than typical Presbyterian worship. The feeling is laid back and participatory, and questions are encouraged.

"It's constantly changing," said Bell-Wyminga, "because as new people come in, they add their own flavour."

Raising leaders in Edmonton

"My priority is to give native people hope and a future," said Rev. Hoosik Kim, director of Edmonton Urban Native Ministry. "Sticking to the past cannot draw people into a better future. I recognize that aboriginals in this land need both physical and mental healing. They also need reconciliation in various relationships. Going one step forward, they require leadership for the generations to come."

To do this, Kim concentrates on children and youth. "I like to make aboriginal students into role models. Even one person's influencing power is uncountable. Many native leaders in various fields will be made at EUNM and they will change their families and communities."

Kim came to Canada in 1999 as a missionary of the Presbyterian Church in Korea, and worked at various native ministries in the west before starting the Edmonton ministry three years ago with Canada Ministries and the Presbyteries of Edmonton-Lakeland and Western Han-Ca. He said many Korean congregations are involved in native ministry, and he began this work when he felt a calling from God to do so.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF CARIBOO HOUSE CHURCH MISSION. ILLUSTRATION: (OPPOSITE PAGE) CLIFF BEAR

Edmonton has an aboriginal population of about 43,000, the second-largest in the country.

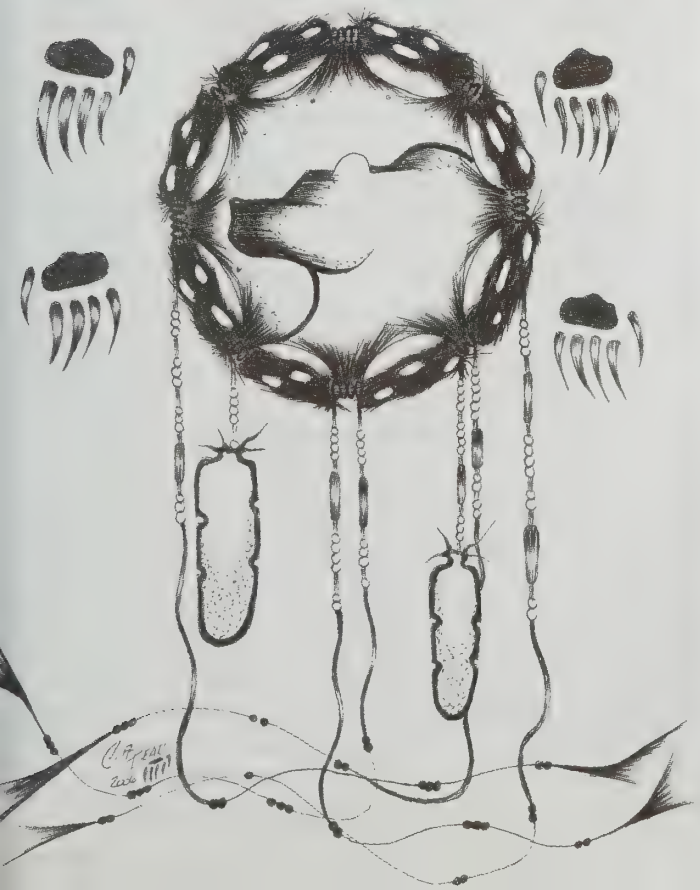
EUNM currently offers a drop-in centre, hot meals during winter, emergency support, counselling, job training, Sunday worship, vacation Bible school, youth camps, a healing workshop, discipleship and leadership opportunities, music, Tae Kwon Do and crafts, all of which were designed with Kim's desire to not only help and heal, but to strengthen, enable and encourage people to turn their lives around.

Kim is the only person on staff, and he relies on dedicated volunteers to make things work. Whenever possible, he encourages aboriginal people to assume leadership roles, such as the two volunteers who help things run smoothly at the drop-in centre and are in the mission's first steps job training program.

Although it can be difficult to see if people are actually changing, Kim said he can "feel the differences.

"I see it in their attitude, and they way they approach me. Some people ask me to have consultations and prayers even though I didn't request it. The new generation is very different; children and youth have many more possibilities. At the youth leadership camp, I saw how some youth were changed. On the first day, they ridiculed Christians, but after, they prayed and cried with others.

"The greatest need is prayer," he continued. "Of course I also need money, volunteers, materials, and many supports, but I believe that the ministry does not belong to men but to God."



I want to know there's a God

Clifford Bear represents everything Anishinabe wants to accomplish in its ministry. Shy, quiet and an artist, Bear used to wander the Winnipeg streets with his gang members—a rival gang, it turns out, of Lenny McKay's former posse. The two men now frequent Anishinabe at the same time; previous rivalries long extinguished.

To speak of it now, Bear seems embarrassed; his kind eyes and inviting smile make it difficult to believe he was once driven by poverty and addictions to a life of crime. He was in jail every Christmas since the age of 12. But after coming to Anishinabe on the advice of his sister, Bear became a Christian and cleaned up his act.

"I was outside in my backyard one day and I looked up to the stars. I was fed up with the drinking and the drugs. I wanted to give up," he admitted, sitting at a fold-up table , sketching his latest canvas. "So I looked up and I said, 'I want to know there's a God.' I want help. I need help. I was an alcoholic, and that day I quit cold turkey. I quit everything, and began to draw. That was three years ago. (Bear's art work can be seen throughout this special edition of the *Record*, starting from the cover.)

"I didn't think of myself as a man before, I was just another gangster," continued the 35-year-old. "My real mom wasn't there when I was growing up, but now Margaret [Mullin] is there for me. Whenever I need help, she's the person I can go to. She's the one I can trust. I'm trying to trust more. I'm growing every day."

It is hoped that Anishinabe's new housing complex will provide needed respite for people like Bear, who are trying to break free of life on Winnipeg's streets.

"When it gets dark here, it becomes a different place," said McKay, who was shot once and stabbed seven times during his years as a gangster. "Every weekend you wake up and there's been a shooting or a stabbing."

For now, Bear receives the peace he needs inside Anishinabe's walls. At worship on Sunday, seated on fold-up chairs, the congregation sings "Blessed Assurance" in Cree. A guitar is played, along with a piano. Some people close their eyes. Others sing loudly and off key. The scent of simmering soup and warming bannock wafts from the kitchen, waiting to be served. – *AM*

Restoring the shine to a tarnished covenant

Presbyterians are called to live out the church's confession

BY LORI RANSOM
NATIONAL CHURCH ANIMATOR

Iroquois peoples, the Haudenosaunee, members of the Six Nations Confederacy, entered into some of the earliest treaties in North America with European settlers. These treaties were recorded symbolically in wampum belts. The Guswenta wampum belt of 1692 records the treaty known as the Covenant Chain. A silver covenant chain was fashioned with three links representing *peace*, *friendship* and *forever*—the key concepts of the treaty.

Silver tarnishes easily, and so must be polished regularly to maintain its shine. Silver was selected for the covenant chain as a reminder that treaty relationships, like all relationships, require regular attention, lest they too become tarnished for lack of care.

The notion of "covenant" draws our attention as Christians. Twenty years ago, nine church leaders, including then-moderator Rev. Dr. Charles Hay, issued a pastoral statement calling for *A New Covenant* with Aboriginal Peoples. They challenged Canada to "recover some of the deeper spiritual meaning of covenant-making, the essence of which resides in God, the Creator, the Great Spirit."

Aboriginal people often describe our covenants, the treaties, as sacred. Aboriginal communities hold annual treaty days. These are great community gatherings. People with roots in these communities often travel great distances to take part. Treaty days may begin with a ceremony at sunrise. An elder will lead the people in giving thanks to the Creator. It is a time to reflect on the gifts of the Creator to the people. And it is a time to remember the sacred promises between aboriginals and the newcomers to Canada, to share the land, to respect each others' ways, and to live, as the covenant chain reminds us, forever in peace and friendship.

It's quite remarkable how aboriginal people honour the treaties and their treaty relationships. After all, they are the people who are generally acknowledged to have gotten the raw half of the deal, to whom many promises were made but not kept. Yet they are the ones who seem to most value and uphold their treaty covenant with other Canadians—warts and all.

We can be thankful that, along with other denominations, the Presbyterian Church recognizes the covenantal nature of our relationship, and knows that it's time to polish the silver of the covenant chain, and restore right relationships with aboriginals.

In Exodus, we remember how God heard the cries of his people Israel, and remembered His covenant with them.

Aboriginal Peoples also have been asking to be heard.

Fundamentally, their's is a simple request: hear, listen, understand. And fundamentally that is where healing and reconciliation will begin.

It's instructive to note the emphasis placed on listening to aboriginals within all of the church's native ministries. Listening takes place in healing circles, in urban drop-in centres, and in house churches. Healing circles facilitate the process of what communications specialists now call "active listening," ensuring that everyone who wishes has an opportunity to speak without interruption. As a participant in a healing circle, one commits to listening carefully when others speak, and waiting one's turn to offer one's thoughts. Everyone gets to be heard, and the process of waiting to speak creates an environment where issues are not so much debated but revealed in all their dimensions as each individual contributes their thoughts.

The 132nd General Assembly approved an approach to healing and reconciliation called, *Walking Together*. The name derives from the closing sentence of the church's 1994 Confession to Aboriginal Peoples: "With God's guidance our Church will seek opportunities to walk with Aboriginal Peoples to find healing and wholeness together as God's people."

In approving *Walking Together*, the General Assembly called upon Presbyterians to live out this aspect of our confession. Members are invited to seek out opportunities to walk with aboriginals, to get to know them, to listen, hear, and understand our aboriginal neighbours within Canada. In so doing we will show love for our neighbours, and God willing, we will polish our relationship, renew our covenant, and transform Canadian society for the better of all peoples.

– Lori Ransom is the PCC's healing and reconciliation animator, responsible for educating congregations on aboriginal issues and helping them forge relationships with Aboriginal Peoples.

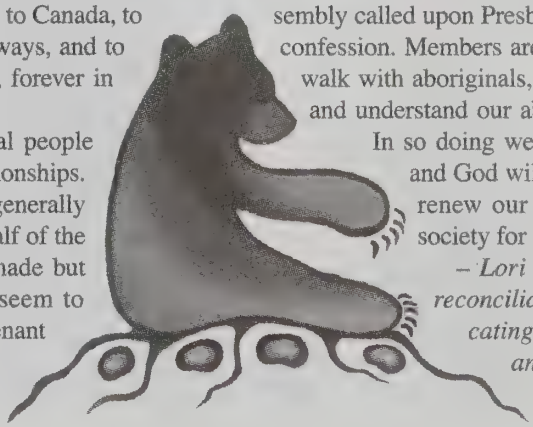


ILLUSTRATION: JOHNNY MARCELAND

'Sharing the pain' story continued from page 22

work directly with our native ministries to see real transformation in relationships. Non-aboriginal people need support in moving forward as well."

The fact that Ransom only has a year in her contract to work towards her goals doesn't seem to faze her.

"One of the big emphases is to support local initiatives and get them going; to get stuff happening in the church at the ground level," says Ransom, just days after moving into the national offices. "The goal is not to have this be one person or one team's ministry. The goal is to build a relationship with aboriginal people, and I hope this will be a catalyst for on-going action."

Stephen Allen, who heads Justice Ministries, pointed out that the 2005 General Assembly made native ministries a priority, adopting a motion that healing and reconciliation issues should inform the work of every department of the Life and Mission Agency. The current program comes out of that focus. "I think it complements the work of native ministries," says Allen. "This initiative is the third part of it."

Allen highlights the work the church has been doing for decades on aboriginal issues in Canada, noting a statement made by church leaders back in 1987, when then-moderator Rev. Dr. J. Charles Hay covenanted to work towards constitutional recognition and protection of aboriginal self-government in this country on behalf of the PCC.

"My own read of the history of the church's recent efforts is not that things have been tried and failed," says Ransom. "All the past efforts have been fruitful. The new ministry is a natural consequence of the faithful work of many who have gone before me."

"In every gathering there is give and take," says Rev. Rick Fee, general secretary of the Life and Mission Agency. "The important thing is to encourage people to keep offering their opinions so the best possible outcome can be reached."

It is a fine balance finding this path and the ministries' role has not yet been fully defined.

"I'm not against focusing healing and reconciliation on Presbyterian congregations across the land," says Rev. Henry Hildebrandt, director of the Kenora Fellowship Centre. "What we're trying to emphasize is that the missions themselves can be part of that awareness, but that doesn't seem to be the case."

Mullin agrees. "We've already had the Journey to Wholeness," she says, referring to the campaign launched in 1998 that raised money for healing initiatives. "The whole thing was about bringing the aboriginal message to the church. There were videos made, printed material mailed out, people visited presbyteries and participated in sharing circles. There are few people taking advantage of the material that is already there," she adds, the frustrated tone rising in her voice. "People have heard; they just don't want to listen."

People like Lenny McKay, the man formerly known as 'the Enforcer', are testaments to the work of native ministries and the difference that a few dedicated outreach workers can make.

"I just walked in one day and the rest is history," says McKay, referring to that fateful day about five years ago when he first visited Anishinabe. "I wanted to change my life I guess."

It is a complicated life to leave behind. "Guys come after me because they want to make a name for themselves to get into a rival gang," says McKay, who now helps maintain the Anishinabe building where he meets again people from his former life, this time as somebody who can provide them some help.

Admitting that Mullin's words on forgiveness during Sunday worship make him think about issues of faith, McKay continues to work out for himself what redemption is all about. He knows that others are still struggling to leave a life of crime and hopelessness, and searching for someone who will help them find their own path to healing.

"In a way, I'm trying to make up for it. I don't know if I ever will, but I'm trying."

Learn more, get involved

Anamiewigummig (Kenora Fellowship Centre): Henry Hildebrandt; 807-468-9063; hhilde@gokenora.com
Cariboo House Church Ministry: Jon Wyminga, Shannon Bell-Wyminga; 250-249-9611; carpresb@uniserve.com
Edmonton Urban Native Ministry: Hoosik Kim; 780-477-1769; hoosik@hotmail.com
Hummingbird Ministries: Mary Fontaine, mfontaine244@yahoo.ca
Mistawasis Memorial Presbyterian Church: George Yando, 306-922-2718, geoyando@sasktel.net
Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry: Stewart Folster, 306-382-1522, sncm.folster@shaw.ca
Winnipeg Inner City Missions: Margaret Mullin (Anishinabe), 204-942-8682, mullin.mim@shawcable.com
Warren Whittaker (Flora House), 204-586-5494, pccflorahouse@hotmail.com
The Presbyterian Church's Healing and Reconciliation site: www.presbyterian.ca/healing/index.html
The Presbyterian Church's Confession: www.presbyterian.ca/canadaministries/confession.html

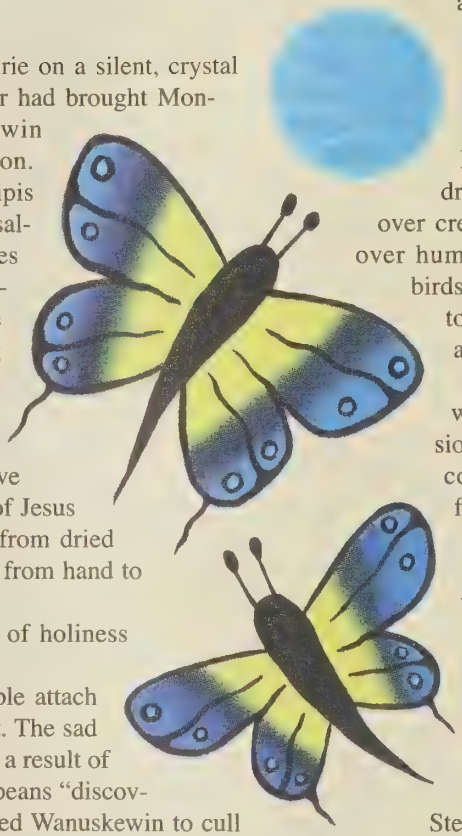
For more resources please see our web site.

All my relations

Jesus' lilies of the field are like native spirituality

BY KEITH RANDALL

I stood on the Saskatchewan prairie on a silent, crystal winter day. Rev. Stewart Folster had brought Montreal visitors to the Wanuskewin Heritage Park just north of Saskatoon. We had seen the videos and mock tipis and eaten bison burgers and wild rice salad. We had heard the songs and stories of people seeking shelter and sustenance in this place for 6,000 years. We had seen the massive stones waiting patiently, and felt the spirit of this ancient place.



Earlier, we had seen Stewart serving his people at the Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry, teaching the lessons of Jesus Christ, bathing us in smoke wafting from dried sweet grass, passing the talking stone from hand to hand around the circle of worship.

It all came together in a moment of holiness beneath the blue big sky.

The legends of Canada's first people attach them firmly to the land and all upon it. The sad plight of many natives today is largely a result of alienation from the land that we Europeans "discovered." Natives use the land as they used Wanuskewin to cull bison herds. We own the land. Big difference.

Stewart often signs off his e-mails with *Kitche Mitakwias* (pronounced kshay mitakweeass): All my relations. Leroy Little Bear is a lawyer and teacher at the University of Lethbridge and director of Harvard University's Native American Program. In *Advancing Aboriginal Claims*, he notes that English and other Euro-languages are noun-oriented, and very good at dichotomies and categories: saint-sinner, black-white, man-animal. Amerindian languages, on the other hand, are generally verb-oriented, stressing process, actions and constant flux.

"The flux," he writes, "gives rise to the belief that all of creation is made of energy waves. If all is animate, then all must be somewhat like humans: awareness with energy forces that we call spirit. If all have spirit, then all of creation—including animals, rocks, the earth, the sun, the moon, and so forth—are 'all my relations.'"

Even in memory, that moment gazing at the distant Saskatchewan horizon, sensing with awe God's vast creation, strikes a deep humility. If everything is spirit-filled, I am related to all creation. The concept startles one raised on King James' Genesis that gave man dominion—sovereign authority or control, according to my dictionary—over all the earth. Back home in Montreal, Rev. Richard Topping at St. Andrew & St. Paul points out that human rule over creation should mirror divine merciful rule over human beings. That perspective and Jesus' birds of the air and lilies of the field seem close to the gentle Indian way, another of Stewart's favourite expressions.

The history of Europeans' encounter with North American natives tells of missionaries who "went native," aboriginals who converted to Christianity, and others who found sustenance in both beliefs. I am neither theologian nor great expert on native spirituality. My family tree shows no native connection, and I'm not likely to move into a tipi any time soon. Rather, a window has opened through which I see God's universe from a different perspective.

"The teachings of faith, honesty, kindness, caring, sharing, love, honour and respect are the same in both beliefs," Stewart told me. "I don't have to give up any part of my Native spirituality to be a Christian and a follower of Christ to the fullest."

He explained that in native spiritualities birds and animals, dying to feed and clothe us, are symbols of caring and sharing, and reminders of Christ's sacrifice for us on the cross.

This bewildered wanderer seeking God in the contemporary detritus of science has found a new path to explore. Whether our ancestors were created from Eden's dust, crawled through a hollow log, fell through a hole in the sky, or chemically created from Big Bang residue seems to matter little. The gentle rain of all my relations softens my soul's arid soil, reassuring me that I am part of an infinite Creation, and the seed of Jesus' word finds more fertile ground. Now, listening to prayers, Scripture, sermons and hymns through the filter of this humility, of all my relations, a loving God is closer, His message more heartening and richer, than ever before. God can touch us anywhere, even on a cold winter day on the endless Saskatchewan prairie at Wanuskewin. – *Keith Randall is a Montreal-based broadcaster and writer.*

ILLUSTRATION: JOHNNY MARCELAND

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Love Christ and feed his flock

Being a minister is a life-long calling not disenfranchisement

BY PHILIP LEE



The present practice of The Presbyterian Church in Canada is to place retired ministers of Word and Sacrament on the appendix to the roll of presbyteries. As members on the appendix to the roll these persons have the right to speak on matters before the court but do not have the privilege of moving or seconding motions or of voting.

This practice diminishes the honour of the ministerial office: In the Presbyterian tradition, we do not honour any individual over any other individual. We are charged as Christians to "honour all people." However, we do confer honour on certain offices. And no office is given more honour than that of minister of Word and Sacrament. The present practice implicitly relegates the office to a merely professional and functional status.

- Ministry is authorized by Scripture: John Calvin made no distinction between the office of bishop and presbyter. He held that those two terms were interchangeable. Hence our detractors gave us the name Presbyterians; it stuck. Because Calvin interchanged these two terms, he found scriptural description of ministry in such texts as Titus 1:7-9 and I Tim. 3:1-7. "The substance is," Calvin wrote of these verses, "that none are to be chosen save those who are of sound doctrine and holy lives and not notorious for any defect which might destroy their authority and bring disgrace on the ministry."

Since there was parity between presbyters, how could there be distinctions or ranking among Christ's ordained servants? There is not a word among the Church Fathers or the Reformers in opposition to this kind of two-tiered practice because they simply did not view ordination in such a limited sense.

- The ordination questions asked of a minister of Word and Sacrament have little to do with the function of a minister, but with her spiritual life. Even the final question regarding the work of the minister goes beyond the merely functional: "Do you promise in the strength and faith of the Lord Jesus Christ to conduct yourself in your private and public life as becomes his gospel and do you give yourself diligently and cheerfully to the service of Christ's Word, sacraments and discipline, for the furtherance of his reconciling mission in the world?"

It is obvious that ministers are not being merely licensed into the practice of a profession in a specific venue. Ministers are being ordained, receiving spiritual confirmation for positions in the worldwide mission of Christ, which they will hold so long as they are faithful to it.

- In the beautiful charge suggested for the Church of Scotland service of Ordination, it is clear that the office of min-

PHOTO: © WWW.ISTOCK.COM/BERND KLUMPP

istry is broader and deeper than service to any particular congregation: "Love Christ and feed his flock, taking the oversight thereof, not as if thou wert lord over the people committed to thee, but being an example to all in word, in conduct, in charity, in spirit, in faith, and in purity. Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, and to teaching. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Pray always, watching thereunto with all perseverance. Thus shalt thou save both thyself and those that hear thee; and in that day when the chief shepherd shall appear thou shalt receive a crown of glory which fadeth not away."

- The minister is a member of presbytery in much the same way that a layperson is a member of a particular congregation. In presbytery, the presbyter listens to the Word, receives the sacrament and submits to the discipline of Christ's Church. Is it fair that ministers when they reach the age of retirement no longer be allowed to participate fully in the life and work of the presbytery, synod and General Assembly of the Church?
- Our church is following a course quite different from that of other reformed churches around the world, certainly different from nearly all other denominations with either a Presbyterian or Episcopal polity. Our sister churches, the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the Church of Scotland have no such practice.

Apparently the motivation for adopting this unusual practice was to professionalize or functionalize the ministry. The logic is that when the minister no longer functions as a full-time (or half-time) minister, that person is demoted to a lower status. She/he has lost accreditation. The reality, however, is that if the minister has been properly ordained and properly understands the office, she/he is serving Christ by word and example, by study and prayer, by presence and influence, by faith, hope and charity all the days of life, "Until the chief shepherd shall appear."

Philip J. Lee is a retired minister.



Children attending tutoring classes organized with the support of PWS&D's partner, the Institute for Development Education.

GUY SMAGGHE, PWS&D

Being a child in the urban slums and rural villages around Chennai, India is tough. The schools are overcrowded and the majority of the parents cannot help their children with their homework – because they never went to school themselves. Many of the children work to support their families. The result is that many children never start school – or they drop out early because they find it too hard. PWS&D's partner, the Institute for Development Education, is helping give children a chance to succeed in school. Special classes for working children and tuition classes in the evening for students are helping children and youth succeed in school – and discover the skills that will help them break cycles of poverty.

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Why we send the kids to summer camp

It keeps a marriage vibrant and the kids get a lot out of it too



When I was 11 years young, my parents sent me to Loose Moose Bible Camp as a prize for memorizing Scripture verses like "Be ye kind one to another." I was beaten up twice that week by Bruce Johnson, the meanest kid this side of Harlem. Bruce had wrists as big as my thighs and tattoos the size of Bermuda. He was *so* unsaved that he couldn't even sing along on "Kum Ba Yah," or "It Only Takes A Spark To Get A Fire Going."

One afternoon Bruce used tuck shop money to coax me into the woods and threatened to kill me right there if I didn't yell certain words very loudly. Words I hadn't learned in Sunday school.

I got to thinking about Bruce the other day when one of our kids tugged on my sleeve and handed me a brochure for summer camp. Though I'm not eager to see any of the children beaten up, I must admit that there are several very good reasons we will send them to camp this year. Here are just a few:

1. Peace. My wife Ramona and I had three children in three years, so each year when school is dismissed and mid-July rolls around, she threatens to run away from home. Camp has kept our marriage vibrant for more than 19 summers. One week of peace and serenity goes a long way in making up for the other 51.

2. Babysitting. When someone offers to take the children off our hands, feed and entertain them for less than $2 an hour, I say, "Would you like them for the winter?" Of course, there's a downside to everything: Last year at camp my 10-year-old learned to drive a speedboat, dive off the rocks and shoot with live ammunition. He also heard Bible stories from Mr. Chadwick, an ex-con.

3. Romance. Is there a better place to experience first-hand the ups and downs of relationships? I have yet to meet a guy who comes home from summer camp without at least three former girlfriends. Speaking from experience, I fell in love 16 times at camp and once kissed a girl named Patty Gilbert while she was working on a leather craft. I even asked her to marry me, but she said her boyfriend would kill her if she did.

4. Music. Where else can you develop a deep and abiding love for great hymns of the faith like: "Get your elbows off the table Philip Callaway," and "My hope is built on nothing less than Scofield's notes and Scripture Press." Camp kids not only know these songs by heart, they can do the actions.

All right, I will get serious. Two reasons outweigh all the others when I think of sending our children to camp. They are simple:

Gratitude. For a month following camp, our children do not once complain about indoor plumbing, soft mattresses, or food that is dead when they eat it. Camp helps them appreciate the little things in life. Like clean utensils, shampoo and sleeping in a room with fewer than 20 people.

Grace. Remember Bruce? Well, that day in the woods as I cursed a blue streak, he stood by, smiling and laughing at me. "Louder!" he said, "I can't hear you!"

So you can imagine my surprise when that very night, I watched him stride to the front of a dusty old chapel and fall to his knees by a hand-carved altar. Bruce prayed out loud that night words I'll never forget: "Um...God," he said, halting often, "if you're around here ... well ... I need some help. I'd like you to change me ... nothin' else seems to work."

The results were startling. God's grace has a way of changing us all, doesn't it? The very next day Bruce asked me to forgive him, and I did. And when it came time to leave he hugged me until my ribs squeaked and he cried like a 10-year-old—tattoos and all. Just the other day I was told that Bruce is a major in the Salvation Army.

In the summer he's Program Director at Loose Moose Bible Camp.

Phil Callaway is a popular speaker and the author of a dozen books including *Parenting: Don't Try This At Home*, and *Who Put the World on Fast Forward?* (Harvest House). His website is www.philcallaway.com

PHOTO: © 2007 JUPITERIMAGES CORPORATION

Summer camps with heart & soul

BY NANCY DEVINE

Fostering a love of music

Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise; give thanks to Him and praise His name. For the Lord is good and His love endures forever; His faithfulness continues through all generations. – PSALM 100:4-5



In 1972, The Presbyterian Church in Canada was about to launch its newly minted *Presbyterian Book of Praise*. Instead of holding a workshop or a seminar, the book's publishing committee decided to run a week-long summer camp session at the United Church's Gold Lake Camp, just west of Eganville in the Ottawa Valley.

It was so popular volunteers decided to run it again, and it has continued to be run by volunteers, under the auspice of the Synod of Quebec and Eastern Ontario.

Since 1990, the camp has grown so much it had to be split into two, one in Eastern Ontario at Wesley Acres camp near Picton and one in Southwestern Ontario at Camp Tamarack near Bracebridge. Both camps are run in the last two weeks of August each year.

Ian MacCready, an Ottawa Valley native and the founding web administrator for The Presbyterian Church in Canada, was among that first group of campers. He and his family have been involved in almost every camp since.

"We had the use of a theatre organ for the camp, so I got to drive it back to Ottawa," he says. "Everyone had such a great time we wanted to do it again the following year. One of the reasons I liked it so much at the time was that it was cool to be a young Christian there. As a teenager it was great to be in a place where you could praise the Lord together. There are friends who have come every year, and we have bonded over the music."

MacCready, a singer, also got involved as the camp's sound technician. Now when he goes to Tamarack with his family, he's sharing his knowledge of sound equipment with the campers, including those who participate in the popular garage band sessions.

"There are people at camp who are not musical at all, but they appreciate the music," he says, adding there are a lot of knitters who sit by the lake and listen to the music. "They get a lot of projects finished in the week."

Through his work with the church, MacCready has met with many people he first met at camp. Some have gone into ministry, and others have remained involved in the music programs at their churches. He says it is amazing to see how something that began as a tool to help people get used to a new hymnal grew to create a musical ministry.

"For a lot of people, music camp has fostered a love of music, and it's enabled

For a lot of people, music camp has fostered a love of music, and it's enabled them to use those gifts for the church'



them to use those gifts for the church."

There have been years that MacCready has not been able to attend music camp because of other commitments.

"I really feel the loss of that time. It is an important part of my summer routine and an important part of my year," he says.

Presbyterian Music Camp is both non-profit and self-supporting. Donations made to the Alison Stewart-Patterson Fund help those interested in attending camp. Both weeks of camp are represented on the Toronto/Kingston Synod Camp Board.

For more information about PMC, visit www.musicamp.ca

Camp Kannawin pays dividends for years and years

But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect... – 1 PETER 3:15

Rev. Helen Smith, director at Camp Kannawin on the shores of Sylvan Lake near Calgary, says the values and skills learned at the camp go well beyond the 6.75 acres and week-long fun in the great outdoors sessions.

In addition to all the traditional camp activities like swimming, canoeing, crafts, archery, campfires, hiking and overnight out-trips, Kannawin also has morning and evening devotions, Bible study and discussions.

"We did a survey last year to find out how people heard about our camp," she said. "Predictably, 50 per cent heard about Kannawin at church [and] friends and family accounted for about 20 per cent or so, but the remainder heard about us from the

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Internet. And when we asked why they chose to send their kids to Kannawin, 75 per cent of all the respondents said it was because of the Christian emphasis—so maybe, just maybe, we have an impact on the kids' lives."

Smith, who lived in Ontario for many years, was familiar with the concept of church camping. Her kids were veterans of Glen Mhor Camp (now known as Cairn) in the Muskoka area. When the job opportunity came up in her new home province, she embraced it, though with some trepidation. But she has found a home among the young staff and campers.

"Well, I'm old. I look old, I have grey hair, but I love this age group,"she says. "My camp name is Hen—I guess they've decided I'm like the mother hen. This is a really wonderful age. They are exploring their lives, their faith, and it's a privilege to be there, helping them get excited about the gospel—with Peter's words about explaining our hope always with me."

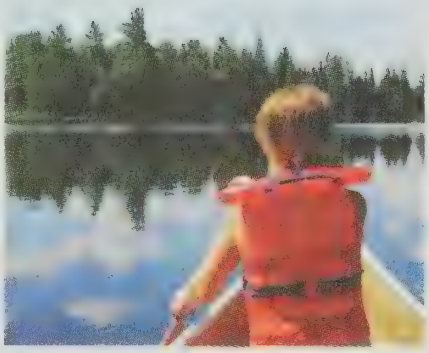
Camp Kannawin began in 1941, when the Women's Missionary Society helped the Synod of Alberta and Northwest buy the land for $300.

In 1943, the first campers stayed in large canvas tents and the facilities included a kitchen shack and makeshift toilets in the bush.

Today, it is fully accredited for year-round use with the Alberta Camping Association, and can accommodate 50 campers plus staff in nine cabins. There's a communal dining hall and a large meeting room for indoor activities.

"We've got a loyal bunch of campers and staff," says Smith. "In the winter months, when I am visiting churches to talk about camp, I will also have kids ask me if I know if so-and-so is coming to camp next year; they really plan their year around it."

She knows that camping is an expensive ministry of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, but it is one that pays



off in individual lives for years to come.

"We play this game at camp. The kids are 'in jail' and they can only be released if they sing *Jesus Loves Me*, says Smith. "I was expecting the standard version. Instead, I kept hearing the one they sing at camp. Eventually, I clued in that it was the only version these kids know. The things they learn at camp, in the fun and the fresh air, those things stick."

For more about Camp Kannawin, visit www.synodabnw.ca/camp ◆



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A great new venture

Camps Glen Mhor and Iona come together as one

BY JO AYERS

I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year, "Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown." He said "Put your hand into the hand of God; it shall be to you better than a light, and safer than the known way."

I remember those lines from public school and this summer I saw it happen. On the site of Glen Mhor Camp at Baysville, Ont., now known as Cairn, camp directors, staff, campers and families took a huge step of faith and trust in a wonderful beginning.

Three years ago it was determined that the PCC could not continue to fund church camping as it existed and, after much deliberation and anguish, it was decided to sell the Iona camp site at Bala and move the facility to the existing property at Baysville. The site would be renamed Cairn, and both Glen Mhor and Iona would operate from it. This meant that a whole campsite had to be carved out of the bush in time for summer sessions, and there were many, including some who worked on it, who felt that it might not be possible. But with days and nights of work, little sleep and huge amounts of determination, it happened.

There was a lot of thought and heart given to creating some continuity for Iona: A bucket of water from Hart Lake and ash from a campfire, as well as the camp's wooden cross and other treasures, were brought from Bala and incorporated into the new site. The Glen Mhor staff made it a priority to make "the Iona folk" feel at home, and it was wonderful to watch. The two camps shared some of the facilities, worked sessions at each site, and celebrated by singing their songs to each other.

I feel, as a brand-new senior citizen, incredibly lucky that I still have the opportunity to go to camp. And this summer I witnessed with astonishment, the beginning of a huge act of faith. I was privileged to watch it happen, and proud to be part of the church that claims it. It reminded me, too, that if we can't find the courage to embrace a new beginning, we multiply our own losses. For all the people of Iona, the loss of the Bala site was painful and difficult. They all felt it. But I believe that the participants at the new site found some relief in witnessing this great new venture, and my prayer for them is that they'll be able to tell their grandchildren that they were there at the very beginning.



PHOTO: (BOTTOM) TRAVIS ALLISON/SUBLTEVOX.COM; (TOP) ©ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/RONDA OLIVER

Many find Jo Ayers's claim that she is a senior citizen difficult to believe.

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BODKIN, The Rev. John Alexander, was born on October 27, 1941 in St. Thomas, Ont., the second- born of twin sons. John's early education happened in Brockville, Ont. He studied at Ottawa's Teacher College and began a career in teaching.

Feeling the call to ministry, John resigned his dearly loved teaching profession and continued with his studies at Sir George Williams University (now Concordia) and Presbyterian College, graduating in 1969. He was ordained to the ministry by the Presbytery of Brockville in May 1969.

John served The Presbyterian Church in Canada for 37 years, first as a student minister then as an ordained missionary and finally as a parish minister. He served congregations in Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta and British Columbia. For health reasons, John took early retirement in 2001 from his position as senior minister of St. John's Church, White Rock, B.C. Respected as a gifted preacher and teacher, John passed away on June 16, 2006.

John is survived by his two daughters, Andrea Bodkin and Jennifer Carter, her husband Andrew Carter and his grand daughter Natalie Grace Carter as well as an adopted son Stuart Bodkin.

MCLEAN, Ross B., long-time faithful member and elder of Guthrie Presbyterian Church, Alvinston, Ont., died July 2006 at the age of 85. He served his church and community in many ways for many years with faithful devotion.

Rate for obituary notices: $1 per word or $65 per column inch (the lower amount) plus GST.

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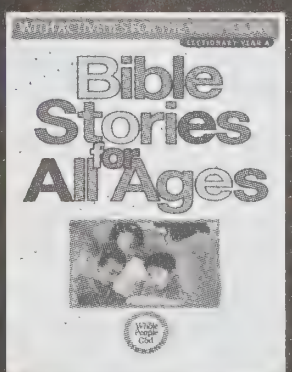
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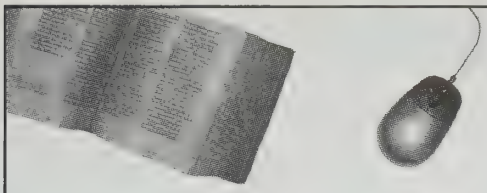
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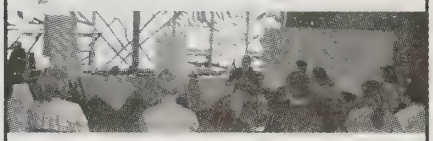
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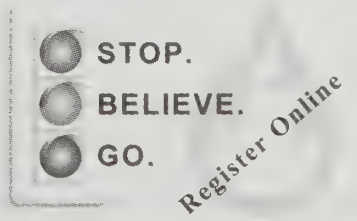
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Honk if you're hopeful

Remember, the future is full of hope

BY DAVID WEBBER

"Burrrrrrr! Where did that cold come from?" I was just in from a foray into the frozen expanses of our lakefront lot to a steaming hot cup of Linda's coffee. "It's -30 Celsius out there! How can a winter that has been so unseasonably warm turn on us like this … and so close to spring too?"

Linda poured a cup of coffee for me and silently looked out on the lake. I knew she was worried about the birds that had been returning early due to the spring-like weather of the past few days. "I put more suet out for the birds but we're almost out of seed," she said. "We'll have to make a run to town to pick some up. What on earth … ?"

I jumped up from the table and joined Linda at the kitchen window. Walking down the lake in the icy sunshine came two Canada geese. They walked to a place just in front of our cottage, honked a couple of times to announce their arrival and hunkered down on the ice. We knew it was old Albert and his wife Priscilla. They came back every year to sit and watch the ice melt prior to raising their brood and commencing their annual fertilizing campaign of our lawn.

"Those guys are getting earlier and earlier every year," said Linda. "I wonder what makes them come and sit on the ice for weeks just watching it melt?"

"Hope, I guess," I said. The truth is I didn't understand why the geese came and watched the ice melt any more than Linda did, but it sounded good. Late that night, inspired by a Norwegian feathered bed and those wonderful seminal moments just before drifting off to sleep, I realized that hope really was the reason that the geese came and sat on the ice. It wasn't that I didn't understand why they came; it was that I didn't really understand hope.



Albert and Priscilla on the ice.

That notion snapped my eyes wide open and kept me up for most of the night. It's not exactly a comforting realization for a Christian pastor to come to, especially one with as much gray in his beard as I have.

Hope has to do with the future. And hope has to do with a belief; a belief that something will happen in the future. The geese on our lake are believing geese. They believe that as sure as the sun turns around the earth (or however that works, and it doesn't really matter to the geese) spring is going to come, the temperature is going to rise, the lake is going to melt, they are going to mate, the eggs are going to be laid, the goslings are going to hatch and as a result the Webber lawn is going to be well grazed and copiously fertilized. This is the same kind of hope that a farmer has when he seeds his grain. But for a farmer, because of human reason I suppose, there are all kinds of "what ifs" that creep in as soon as the tractor is parked. What if it doesn't rain, or what if it rains too much or what if the snow comes before the harvest? Yikes, a good dose of human reason and pretty soon hope seems to get dashed. Little wonder, in both ancient and modern times, secular thinkers and philosophers who are big on reason don't regard hope as a real thing, but as fleeting and illusive. Little wonder heavy thinkers like writers and poets so often speak of human hope as "faint," "wavering," "frail," "desperate" or "feeble."

With hope niggling on me like this, I sought help from the teachings of Jesus. I was somewhat shocked to find they contain no explicit references to hope. This kind of boggled my mind at first. But Jesus teaches his disciples to consider the ravens and not to be anxious about the future because that future is in the hands of a sovereign loving God (Lk.12). Hmmm … the future and hope and faith

PHOTO: DAVID WEBBER

The future is full of hope, even when it seems unreasonable to have any hope at all. Hope after all is grounded upon faith, not dependent upon human reason

in a sovereign loving God. Whatever hope is, it certainly has to do with the future. And from the perspective of an unknown future, how can you have hope that has any grounds to it unless you have faith in a loving God who is in control of the future? From Jesus' perspective, human hope seems to be grounded exclusively in faith; faith in a sovereign loving God in control of the future. From this perspective, the Apostle Paul was giving an accurate description of people without faith when he said they had no hope (Eph.2:12; 1Th.4:13); the fundamental reason for this being that they were "without God."

At this point I have to confess that the Presbyterian in me kind of rebels. I think I have been taught to have a reasoned faith; faith where every aspect of it has been brought under the microscope of human reason. This is the process that Anselm of Canterbury was big on; "faith seeking understanding." But my hopeful geese aren't big on reasoned faith. Neither are Jesus' ravens. As I think about it, reasoned faith seems to be a bit of an oxymoron (that noise you just heard was St. Anselm turning over in his grave). And as I think about it some more, faith that is dependent upon reason may be why I don't understand hope, or what's even worse, don't have a whole lot of hope. Perhaps my quest should be for a reasoned hope, a hope which finds itself growing out of a faith that is not dependent upon human reason but upon something as unreasonable as a risen Lord. This seems to be Peter's perspective when he wrote, "But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have." (1 Peter 3:15)

Hmmm … a reasoned hope. Hope that is founded and grounded upon faith, faith that is believing without seeing or understanding, faith that is not limited by reason or logic, faith like the Patriarchs had, faith that assures hope and provides substance for it (Heb.11:1), faith in a loving sovereign God revealed in a risen Jesus.

Hope grounded upon faith that is not dependent upon human reason. Consider the two Canada geese, sitting on the ice in front of our place. They are filled with hope and don't have one reasoned "what if" between them. Jesus says to live like that, believe like that, hope like that, be liberated by all of that, and thus be enabled to seek first the Kingdom (Mt.6:25, Lk.12:22).

This month the *Record* is about issues past, present and future, with regards to First Nations people. There is much in the past and present that can fill both native and non-native people with despair. I have several First Nations friends, and you know, it occurs to me that each one seems to understand the geese sitting on the ice in front of our place. Perhaps that is why to a person, these friends of mine seem not paralyzed by the past, nor impatient with the present. The future is full of hope, even when it seems unreasonable to have any hope at all. Hope after all is grounded upon faith, not dependent upon human reason. Historically, one of the classic displays of First Nations hope was with the Nishga people of the Nass Valley in northwestern B.C. In 1912, the Nishga people were the first to prosecute a legal land claim with the federal government maintaining that their land had not been given up by surrender or consent. They continued to negotiate patiently and with hope to get aboriginal title, land claims and self-government sorted out. Tenaciously they kept on when all human reason said they could not succeed. On February 15, 1996, they did succeed! An historic agreement in principle was signed with federal and provincial governments. Their example should instruct us that a persistent, patient faith-driven hope ushers in the Kingdom. From my perspective, there are few better examples of the power of a faith-driven hope in the world's history.

Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the *Record*. He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C. house church ministry. His most recent book is *Like a Winter's Aspen: Embracing the Creator's Fire.*

BUILDING HOPE

New Beginnings

November 16, 2006 was a great day! The skies were grey and cold, but the hearts of the people were warm and glowing. All had gathered to celebrate the sod turning ceremony for Anishinabe Place of Hope.

With great dignity, the Aboriginal elder, Stella Blackbird, offered prayers for new beginnings. The drumming group sang ceremonial songs to The Creator.

Rev. Margaret spoke of mighty efforts over the past five years to arrive at this moment.

As the photos were taken, the cry went up, "Where's Gordon? He needs to be in the picture." The question echoed around the muddy field. From afar, running down the road, came Gordon, one of the first people to find help at Anishinabe. "I'm a crossing guard now," he said proudly, showing off his orange vest and large stop sign, "and I'm 17 years sober."

WICM

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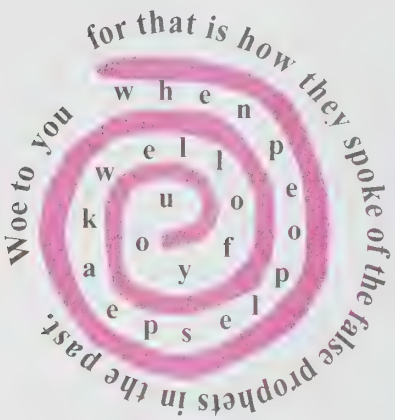
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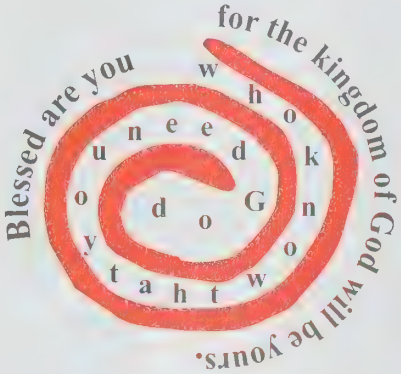
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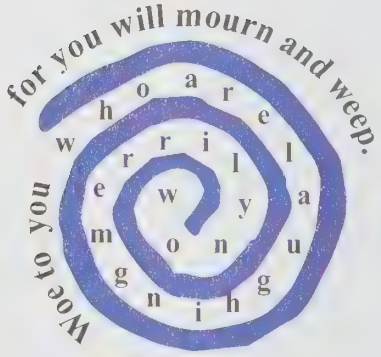
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Once each puzzle is completed, take time to reflect upon each saying as your finger journeys both inward and outward within each spiral. Ponder in your heart what it means to be a disciple of Jesus.



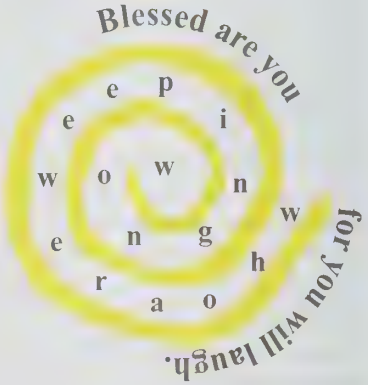






SAYINGS OF JESUS

Read Luke 6:20-26







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Wishing it was Sunday

Vision and willingness keep the church alive and active



Visitors from Taiwan visiting the historical plaques honouring the first missionary to Taiwan, Rev. Dr. George Leslie Mackay at Embro, Ont. Ni-Ling Lin, Wilma Welsh, Ibu Kanbudan and Pauline Lindsay.

At the close of a service, I was shaking hands and greeting members. I was delighted to hear in words what I have felt as I visited in many of the congregations within our church. The member said to me, "Since our new minister came a few years ago I wish everyday was Sunday so that I could come to church." I could tell from the look on his face how sincere he was.

Many of our congregations are celebrating milestones in their ministry within their communities and making the church very visible. I have attended special anniversaries such as 75th, 100th and 125th.

There is a new visibility in The Presbyterian Church in Canada in the appointment of Lori Ransom as the animator for Healing and Reconciliation. She will lead our denomination in helping us work closer with our First Nations people. It was reported that Lori literally arrived on the job on September 1st with her suitcase packed. Many congregations and presbyteries have already had the opportunity to learn first hand from Lori as she helps us understand the task ahead. I encourage you to consider the plans for a month long program in May/June of this year. This issue of *The Presbyterian Record* will provide you with some helpful information. Information was sent to all congregations in the January 2007 PC Pak. Consider inviting Lori to share with your congregation or presbytery.

The Women's Missionary Society and the Atlantic Mission Society continue to be faithful in helping keep mission alive in our congregations by holding Mission Awareness Sundays. If your congregation does not have a mission emphasis Sunday at least once a year, I would encourage you to consider it.

As WMS treasurer, I recently attended the WMS Council Executive meetings. The vision of these women and their willingness to make mission come alive is remarkable. Grants were approved for young adults and others who are planning mission exposure trips. Many congregations are alive and excited about experiencing first hand life within our partner churches in the developing world. They are learning how we can work alongside our brothers and sister in Christ in Eastern Europe, India, Africa and Central America.

What a privilege it was for the WMS to welcome two women clergy Ni-ling Lin and Ibu Kanbudan in November from The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan. They came at the invitation of the WMS to share the work of women within their church in Taiwan. It is the plan of the WMS to have approximately 14 women travel to Taiwan in April to attend their General Assembly, visit some of the historical sites and meet with the women in Taiwan. The theme of the Taiwan assembly will be women's work and the issue of gender justice. The leadership of the church is encouraging women from all of the church districts and presbyteries to participate in this assembly. The Taiwan church approved the ordination of women several years before our church. I will represent our denomination at the Taiwan assembly.

We can be proud of the work of our early missionaries as we learn of the strength of the church in Taiwan. The church showed an increase in membership of 3.63 per cent to 222,381 members. Their evangelism committee is promoting a "Lead One, Tell One" movement in cooperation with local district evangelism organizations. It is their hope to increase their membership by 220,000 members by the year 2015. The Hakka Mission Committee has also set a goal of doubling their membership by the year 2014. It is their hope that the growth in faith will transform Taiwan as it testifies to the reality and purpose of the Kingdom of God in creation. I keep asking myself the question: what can we do in Canada to keep the members we have and make newcomers welcome? Do you wish everyday was Sunday so that you could attend worship?

Blessings,

M. Wilma Welsh

PHOTO: (THIS PAGE) ALEXIS MCKEOWN

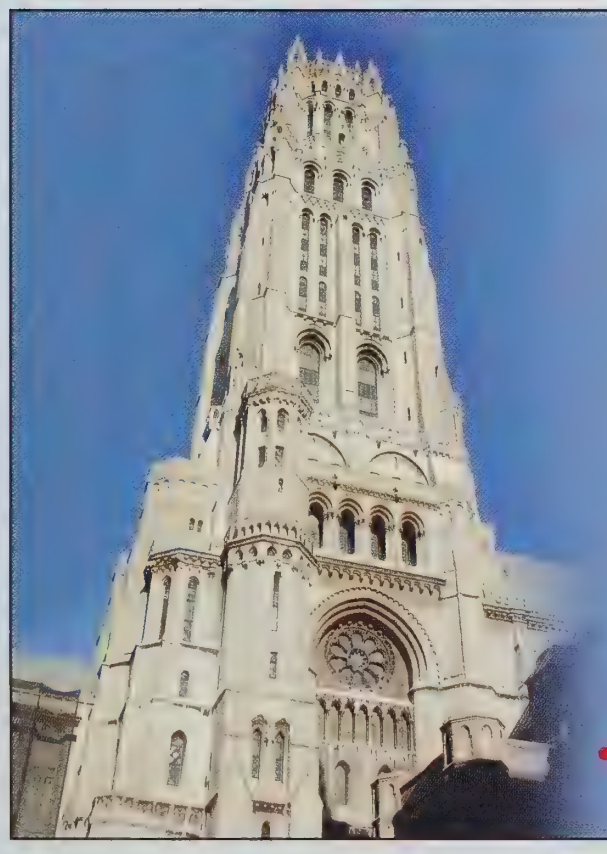


The Moderator celebrated the 75th anniversary of Paterson Memorial, Sarnia, Ont., in November. Wilma Welsh and Rev. Tony Boonstra sandwich two long time serving members of the congregation. Hilda Dayman, middle left, and Jean Deyo have each been members of the chancel choir for 64 years.

MODERATOR'S ITINERARY

FEBRUARY

1 – 2	Ecumenical Church Leaders Event Queen of the Apostles, Mississauga, Ont.
5	Presbyterial of Vancouver Island WMS Event
6	St. Andrew's, Victoria Worship
11	First, Brandon, Man.Worship
15	Presbytery of Manitoba
18	Melville, Toronto Worship



PRESBYTERIAN Record

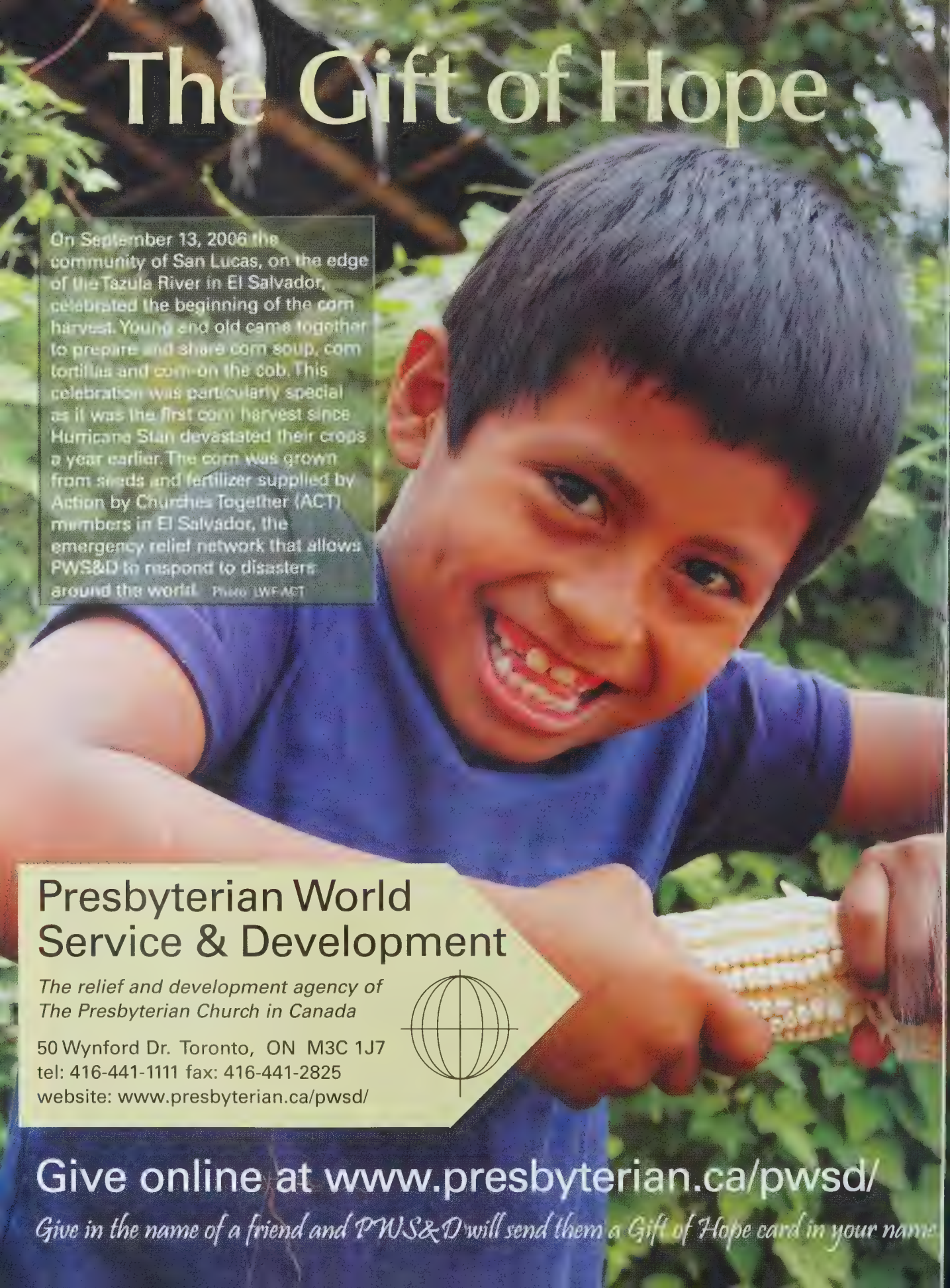
Next Issue:

Notes from the front lines of the progressive church movement
A special report from the Riverside Church in New York City by Andrew Faiz

Future Issues:

- A feature interview with Brian McLaren on the Emergent church movement
- Rick Warren on evangelicalism and social justice

The Gift of Hope



On September 13, 2006 the community of San Lucas, on the edge of the Tazula River in El Salvador, celebrated the beginning of the corn harvest. Young and old came together to prepare and share corn soup, corn tortillas and corn-on the cob. This celebration was particularly special as it was the first corn harvest since Hurricane Stan devastated their crops a year earlier. The corn was grown from seeds and fertilizer supplied by Action by Churches Together (ACT) members in El Salvador, the emergency relief network that allows PWS&D to respond to disasters around the world. Photo: LWF/ACT

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PRESBYTERIAN Record

March 2007



Grant Us Wisdom

Notes from the front lines of the progressive church

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Glen Soderholm –
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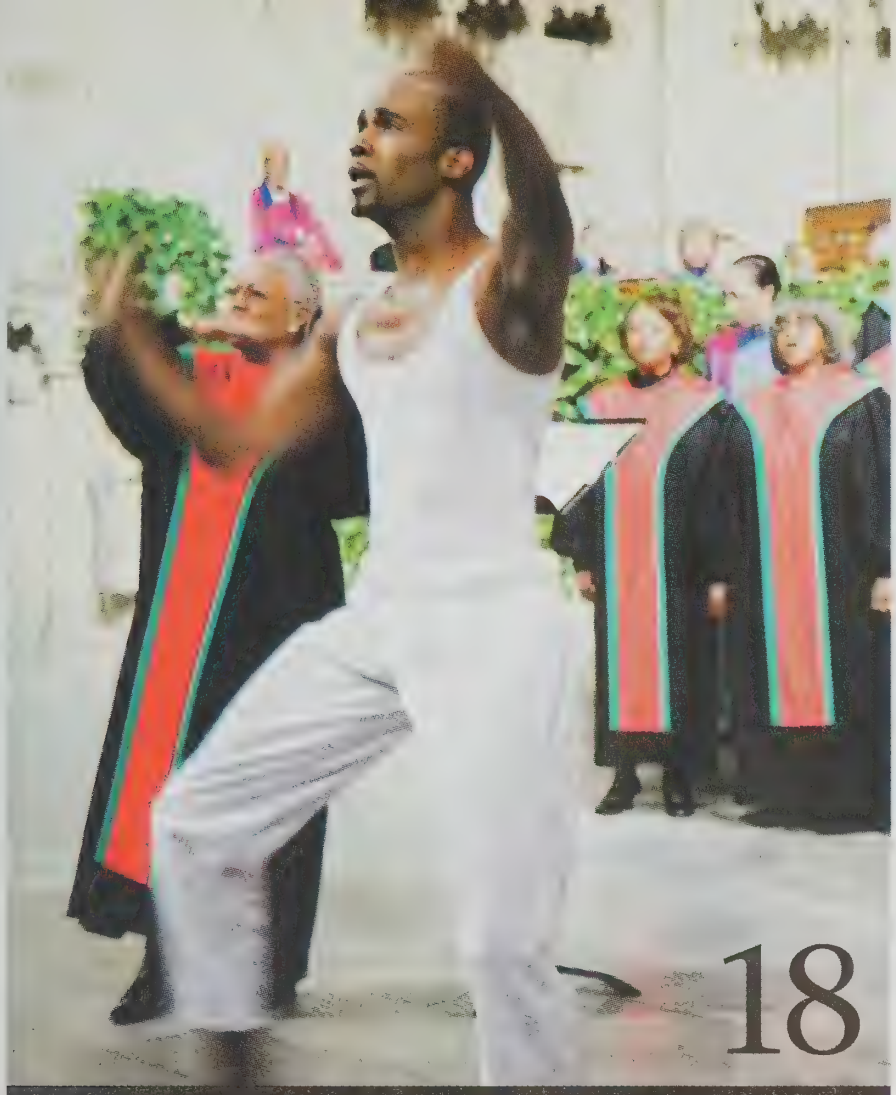
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PRESBYTERIAN Record



Grant Us Wisdom

Notes from the frontlines of the Progressive Church. BY ANDREW FAIZ

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On the Cover: William Sloane Coffin, filmed weeks before his death last May, speaks to the Fifth Fosdick Convocation via a television screen at the Riverside Church in New York City, last October.



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WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

It is a community that seeks to answer Jesus' call



We are the prize churches and movements struggle to gain. The more of us—in the pews, in the pulpits—there are inside a particular building means that church, that denomination, that movement is active, alive. Our numbers are interpreted as vibrancy, as authenticity. And often that is true. Human beings seek the light, the fun, the energetic. Nobody wants to congregate in a mausoleum. Human beings also seek community; they want to be in the company of others who share their interests. But community can be a double-edged sword—all communities are gated in their own way. Several writers this month make that case.

Carol Ann Keys writes about a church that was comfortable being an insular community. Its members were unmoved to action as one by one their various programs faded away. Will Ingram wonders if church itself can be a barrier to Jesus. Peter Bush continues his analysis of our denomination's membership data. Vicki Homes shows how some church communities are unable to help those who are different. Calvin Brown writes about the community of church. In their own way, and their own voice, each of these articles asks the question, What is Church? As does my own article on a conference held last October in New York City.

Let me suggest a different way of asking the question: can the church community—whether local or national or international—answer these questions: When I was hungry, did you feed me? When I was naked, did you clothe me? When I was thirsty, did you give me something to drink? When I was a stranger, did you invite me in? When I was sick, did you tend to my health? When I was in prison, did you visit me?

I recently met Bruce Comptom of Melville, Toronto. He was with Guy Smagghe of PWS&D and was on his way to Nicaragua to run a sports program. His little church—as he described it, though it has 277 members—also runs a basketball program in a high-needs Toronto neighbourhood. That's one way of answering the questions, of using the comfort and confidence one gains in community to a greater good for society at large.

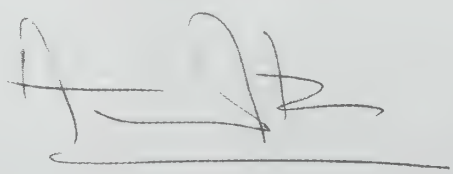
I also recently met Grant Love, though very briefly. He had driven two young women from North Bay, Ont., to Milton, Ont., so they could attend a PYPS meeting on a Sunday afternoon. He then drove them back. He joked that he had been doing that sort of thing as a hockey dad for years, so it was no big deal.

But, it is a big deal—a huge commitment of time, money and effort. And it makes a difference in the life of others.

I don't mean to embarrass these men by naming them, but Grant and Bruce aren't alone in their efforts. Angus McKenzie's article this month about his congregation's can-do spirit is one other example. Every day thousands of people across the country make similar sacrifices. They give up their summer holidays to dig wells in Africa; they take time without pay to teach in some remote village. Everyday I hear about and sometimes get to meet many of these people. And I am always left in awe that people do so much just because they are trying, in their own way, to answer those questions Jesus asked.

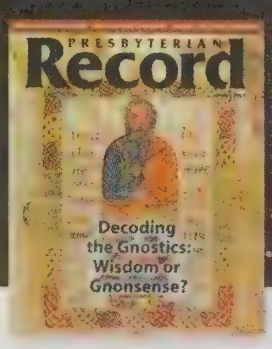
• Editor David Harris and his wife Dawn Davis have many titles between them. Last summer they got two more with the arrival of Yohanna. David is trying out the new title of Dad for a few months away from the office.

• Note from publisher David Harris: Thank you all who participated in *The Presbyterian Record* appeal. The board and staff are overwhelmed by your response and humbled by your generosity. The much-needed funds will ensure the continued telling of the life and work of this church community.



Andrew Faiz

Letters



Core beliefs

I was dismayed to read in Calvin Brown's January article, Debating The Virgin Birth, that "some liberal Christians who deny the virgin birth of Jesus in any realistic sense" are undermining "the whole authority of scripture." I understand Brown to mean that the virgin birth literally happened—it was an historical event.

The real issue is the way we interpret scripture. We can read the Bible literally—as Brown does—or we can read much of it metaphorically. Biblical criticism, which both Brown and I have studied, can be helpful here.

Without getting into the issue of the virgin birth, which I do not take literally but do take metaphorically, I wonder what Brown does with the problem of divorce and remarriage which Matthew and Mark report Jesus spoke against but which our church allows. If he does not take literally the words of Jesus against divorce is he not doing exactly what he quotes St. Augustine as deploring? Let us compare what Jesus is reported to have said on divorce with what we know of God's love in Christ before we deny divorce and remarriage to our people.

I find it hard to accept that if I do not agree with Brown's literal interpretation of the virgin birth I am undermining the authority of scripture any more than I would be undermining the authority of scripture if I did not agree with his theory of the atonement or his understanding of the resurrection or his explanation of the ascension.

I trust, however, that Calvin and I are united by our commitment to Jesus as Lord whichever way we read the Bible.

ZANDER DUNN STELLA, ONT.

Core beliefs come soaring to consciousness: the birth of Jesus, the crucifixion, the empty tomb, the ascension, the appearance of the holy spirit on the day of Pentecost, the current indwelling of the spirit in the souls of many.

But Brown suggests that all of these beliefs can be wiped out if the conception of Jesus was deemed natural birth rather than supernatural.

My faith is not a house of ecclesiastical cards propped up by the Immaculate Conception. Brown should be congratulated for reviving this somewhat provocative issue.

J. GORDON NEAL WHITBY, ONT.

Calvin Brown is right on! Jesus as fully God yet fully man is the central truth of our faith. To take this uncompromising position is to offer the truth to all around us in love and with the understanding that they too are in need of a saviour. Jesus is that saviour. Our hope rests in Him and nothing else.

Thank you Calvin for taking a stand that is increasingly unpopular yet proclaims the very core of our reformed faith.

ALAN ROBINSON PETERBOROUGH, ONT.

Keep also the Lord's Day

Re Reclaiming the Sabbath, by Gwyneth J. Whilsmith, January.

While I agree with Lynn M. Baab, that everyone, where possible, needs a full day for Sabbath, but not necessarily on Sunday. I would emphasize that wherever possible, it should be on a Sunday. While setting aside any one day for Sabbath may satisfy the needs of the individual for rest, listening to God, etc., if everyone has a different day, then the concept of the Lord's Day gets watered down considerably. It is much more honouring to God if we all celebrate it on the same day.

Besides, if everyone has a different day for Sabbath, what would happen to Sunday church services? What would happen to what remains of family life, if parents have a different day off from each other and their kids? The Lord didn't say to keep one day

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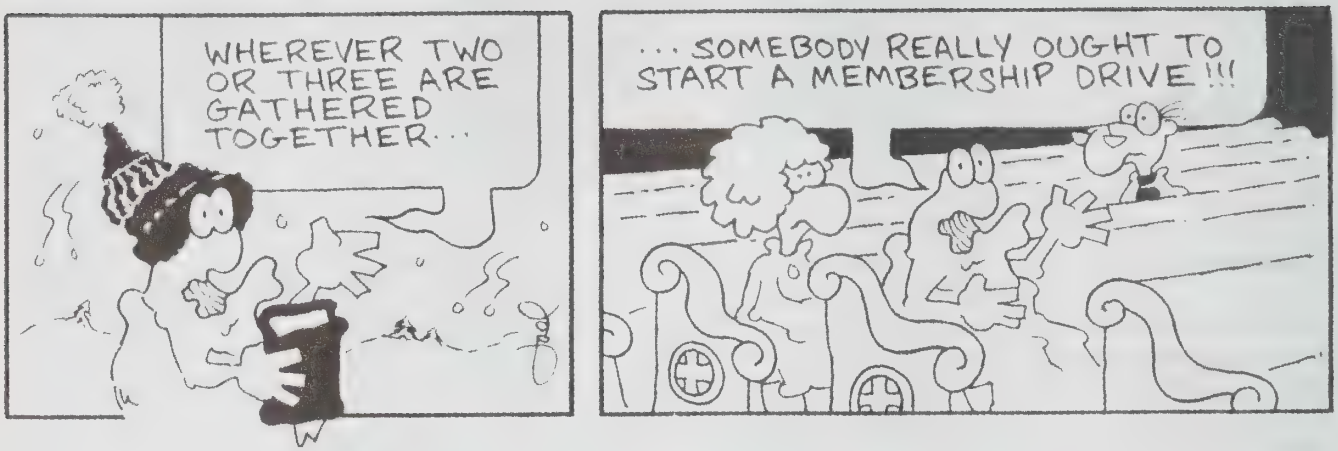
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Pontius' Puddle



in seven holy: He said to keep the seventh day holy. It seems pretty clear to me that He meant it to be the same day each week.

While we are on the subject, how can Christians justify shopping and going to restaurants on Sunday, when it forces people to work on the Lord's Day? This blatantly contravenes the fourth of the Ten Commandments.

ALASDAIR COATS CANMORE, ALTA.

A satisfied student

During the fall semester of 2006, I had the opportunity and privilege to take a course entitled A Global History of Christianity—a survey at Knox College, Toronto, taught by Dr. Stuart MacDonald, assisted by David Robinson.

What prompted me to take this course was a strong desire to know what happened after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, how the Gospel and the Church spread throughout the world, why certain books became part of the canonic New Testament and other books were excluded, what the position of women truly was in the early Christian Church, who was Mary Magdalene and what was her association with Jesus, and other questions regarding the origin of the New Testament and the nature of the early Church.

I found this course very interesting and I learned far more than I had expected about the global history of the Church. The readings for the course, including both primary and secondary sources, and the seminars provided ample material and prompted me to read many other books related to the materials being studied. Some of these included readings of the Gnostic gospels as well as commentaries on these books.

DR. DAVID ROE AURORA, ONT.

Editor Notes: An extensive list of courses is available at all three Presbyterian colleges, in Vancouver, Montreal and Toronto. Also, many synods, presbyteries and congregations also offer lectures and information sessions—some of which are advertised in the pages of the Record.

Go where you're asked

During the summer we had a visitor from Lesotho, Rev. August Basson. He is working in a rural area among the people with the Africa Inland Mission. The ability of the people there to sustain themselves is in jeopardy due in part to the serious problem of erosion. We in the west have made the switch to conservation agriculture—where the soil is disturbed as little as possible. Our experience in this field has 20 years of trial and error so we have learned a lot. The main thing is that it works.

August invited my husband to go and encourage and help him and the farmers there. We went with another couple who were also invited. The men got busy doing farming things. The machinery was of a different type, being built for the small fields that are farmed there, but the principles are the same. The culture and ways of farming were different from our experiences here and that's what made it more interesting. The men were not there to teach or preach. They were there to encourage and work with the farmers, which they did. They had many animated conversations about the way we do things at home and what would work in their situation.

I had the opportunity to dig up some rusty physiotherapy skills and worked with a young boy who now owns a piece of my heart.

It was a wonderful experience. I can highly recommend it. Go where you're asked. Do what you can and you will be a blessing as well as being richly blessed. There are a great many of us who are in a position to be able to take time to travel, explore and share. There is always the problem of knowing where our talents can be used and I'm not sure of the best way to solve that. Got any ideas?

CANDI SCHOPFER CHAUVIN, ALTA.

Thagnk you

I just love the title on the January cover!

ISSA SALIBA OSHAWA, ONT.

Yikes, yikes and yikes

An always welcome issue of the *Record* was received earlier today, but this copy (January) contains an unusual display of editorial errors and I haven't even read any full articles yet!

On page 3, the Contents list the two leading features each appearing on page 20 and so I had to leaf through the entire journal to find Gnostic Gospels on page 18 and Innovative Missions on page 25. On page 21, the side-bar column Another Side of Christ presents a good glimpse ("peek") into Gnostic Christianity, but

perhaps you also meant it to constitute a summit of summation by subtitling it as a "peak" into the matter.

Although the three persons in the photo on page 26 are unknown to me, it is obvious that the man on the left side of the photo in relation to Herb Gale is on Gale's right side, not "on his left" and that the woman on the right side of the photo is to Gale's left, not "his right." This is a rather common confusion when pictures are published.

Another error was noted in the October 2006 issue on page 18. In the first sentence of the second paragraph of Don MacLeod's report on his return to China, Ningbo is described as "the capital of Zhejiang province." Ningbo is a (maybe "the") major seaport of Zhejiang but the capital is and has long been Hangzhou. Years ago I briefly served as a physician in both cities.

Best wishes for a successful new year and with hope that your recent financial appeal provides the requisite response.

RON BREMNER SASKATOON, SASK.

More corrections

Moderator nominee David Phillips' home congregation is St. Andrew's-Chalmers, Uxbridge, Ont. Our apologies to Phillips and to St. Andrew's-Chalmers.

And...

Reachout For Life, hosted by Presbyterian minister Dr. Larry Brice is moving its national broadcast time on CTS from Sundays at 2:30 p.m. to Mondays at 11:30 a.m. EST, effective March 19, 2007.

Crossroads Television Systems is available across most of Ontario and other parts of Canada, and is soon expected to be available in parts of Alberta.

The Presbyterian Record welcomes letters to the editor. Please include your name, home address and a daytime telephone number. We reserve the right to edit all letters for length and clarity.

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Knox, Listowel, Ont., celebrated its 149th in October by putting their best faces forward. Assistant minister John Zondag is glowing positively youthful in the company. We look forward to a submission from one of those junior members for the congregation's 199th birthday party.



Cake of the month: 175 years at St. Andrew's, Belleville, Ont., calls for an extra large cake and that's exactly what former ministers Craig Cribar and Laurie Sutherland are helping present to minister Rev. Anne-Marie Jones. It was quite a celebration in November, with local and provincial dignitaries in attendance for worship and lunch.

People & Places

For more People & Places submissions, please visit our website: www.presbyterianrecord.ca



It's been 150 years at Knox, Ripley, Ont., and the small congregation today remains active and involved in the community. They support a number of local and international charities including food banks, Community Christmas hampers, Canadian Foodgrains Bank, World Vision, Big Brothers and Sisters and Sleeping Children around the World. From left: Shirley McCall, Bob McCall, current worship leader Marian Raynard, Harvey Osborne, Joanne Osborne; Frances Nugent, former minister Rev. Hugh Nugent, Collene Sand and former student minister Rev. Richard Sand.



Knox, Bayfield, Ont., celebrated 75 years, with a rededication of the cornerstone in June last year. The faithful gather with Rev. Susan Moore for an anniversary "family" portrait.



We'll start with her name: Rosalyn Gladys Batista Benton: You can feel the multicultural frisson! Rev. Rodger Talbot, left, had years earlier baptized Rosalyn's Scottish-descent, Canadian Presbyterian mom Lynn. He participated in an ecumenical baptism with Father Mark Villanueva of Blessed John XXIII Parish, who was there to represent Rosalyn's Dominican-born, new Canadian, Catholic dad Ramon. The blessed event took place at Gateway Community, Toronto, in January. That's Aunty Gayle looking on.



Kay Morrison, a member of St. John's, Cresswell, Ont., certainly was not going to let something as minor as her motorized chair get in the way of participating in the annual local Santa Claus Parade. One can hear the angel choir: 'Kay M with your wit so light, Won't you lead our revival night?' For another look at St. John's parade participation go to our website.

Three men, one mentor. Donna Carter-Jackson, former student minister and youth leader at Knox, Agincourt, has gone on to preside over the weddings of each of these three men from her former youth programs. Pictured here at Neil Ellis's wedding, from left to right Geoff Olsen, Donna, Bryan Hall and Ellis. Carter-Jackson is currently pastor of St John's Milliken, Toronto.



HAD CAKE LATELY? Share your celebrations with the rest of the church. Send your stories to PnP@presbyterianrecord.ca along with your digital photographs, 300 dpi minimum, high quality JPEGs. Or mail the photographs to: The Record, 50 Wynford Dr., Toronto, M3C 1J7.
To be considered for People and Places, photographs should be sharp and everyone clearly identified. The Record reserves the right to reject any photos not of sufficient quality. Photographs cannot be returned.



SPOTLIGHT

For the first time in its history the Caribbean and North America Council for Mission met in Canada, at Crieff Hills Community last fall. The delegates seen here—including the PCC's Ron Wallace and Margaret Zondo, of International Ministries and Reuben St. Louis, of Youth in Mission—represent 12 denominations from nine countries.

Historic Church part of Online Future

The future is now—and St. Andrew's, Kitchener, Ont., is making the most of it. Rev. Mark Lewis' Sunday sermons are available for viewing on YouTube.com, a new video website that makes filmmakers and celebrities out of the boy- and girl-next-door. The site is so hot that Google snatched it up last October for a whopping $1.65-billion.

Not to be left out, the 152-year-old St. Andrew's has taken its place in this new phenomenon, where 100-million viewings occur every day, and 65,000 new videos are uploaded daily.

"It is the quintessential expression of a global community existing in cyberspace," said Lewis, who joined St. Andrew's last May. "What struck me the most was that some of the sites were reaching an audience of thousands at almost no cost. I am sure that if Jesus were here today, he would use YouTube as a means of spreading the Good News."

The idea to offer Lewis' sermons to the world came from Dave Mitchell, a St. Andrew's elder. Mitchell records the sermons, mixes graphics and choir anthems, and uploads it all to the website. Member Ian McGee helps make the site easy to navigate. Their first offering was in November, and the sermons have received anywhere from 229 hits to just one.

"I hope our members watch when they cannot attend and that they inform others when they are moved by what they view," said Mitchell. "Mark's sermons are inspirational and

'I am sure that if Jesus were here today, he would use YouTube as a means of spreading the Good News'

I know that people outside our church family watch from time to time. I also hope some people who are searching for a church home might be moved to come to St. Andrew's in person, having seen some of these video segments."

St. Andrew's already broadcasts its sermons on local television every other Sunday, and the online presence is an extension of that. Mitchell said he hopes to involve some of the congregation's youth in the video production, and to feature special church projects and events.

To watch Lewis' sermons, visit www.youtube.com and type "reverend mark lewis" in the search box. *–AM*

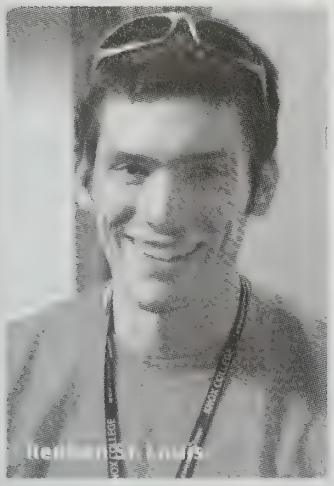
New People, New Resources, New Money

The national office has seen several staff come and go in the last few months. **Sandy Philpot**, administrative assistant in the General Assembly office for 23 years, left her post in January to help out at her husband's burgeoning computer business. **Elizabeth Bartlett**, who worked as a program assistant with the office's deputy clerk Don Muir for six years, assumed the position. Taking Bartlett's position is **Sheila Lang**, who served half time with Ministry and Church Vocations since 2003. She will continue in this post in addition to her new responsibilities.

Ian MacCready, who helped initiate the national church's website a decade ago and was its full time administrator, resigned his position to focus more on his web design business, Maestro Productions. **Alex Macdonald** of Presbyterian World Service & Development will act as temporary web administrator.



Ian MacCready



Reuben St. Louis has been named the new coordinator of the Canada Youth conference, succeeding **Jo Morris** who filled the position since the inaugural event in 2000. St. Louis is also the Youth in Mission coordinator at the national office, and is a former North American Youth Representative for the Caribbean and North America Council for Mission (CANACOM).

The Advisory Committee on Healing and Reconciliation with Aboriginal People approved criteria and a process for applying for healing and reconciliation project funding. Church members are encouraged to consider starting a project and applying for funding. The first application deadline is March 31. Funding criteria are available at www.presbyterian.ca/healing/projects/funding.pdf.

Samantha Edwards, art director for the *Record* since the June 2004 issue, has left to pursue other challenges in her career. Her loss to the magazine is eased by the arrival of **Caroline Bishop**, a Canadian Newsstand Award-winning art director. Bishop's energy and passion for design can be felt starting with this issue. Previous publications she has worked on include *Weekly Scoop* and *Fashion* magazine.



Caroline Bishop

February's PCPak included resources on Healing and Reconciliation with Aboriginal Peoples. Prayers, hymns, facts, material for youth, and reflections on themes such as renewal of relationships, care for creation and healing were provided and are intended to be used on any Sunday between Healing and Reconciliation Sunday (May 20) and June 17, just before National Aboriginal Day (June 21). Lori Ransom, the Healing and Reconciliation Animator, is available to speak to groups and lead workshops on relations with aboriginal people. Contact Ransom at lransom@presbyterian.ca.

World Water Day is March 22, and a toolkit is available to help congregations and individuals take part. KAIROS (Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives) is helping to organize faith and community events that highlight water issues, and the PCC's Justice Ministries department also has worship and education resources available. Contact Katharine Masterton at gturner@presbyterian.ca for more information.

Canada Ministries recently announced three new funds that are available for application for Presbyterian congregations and missions. The new funds are: the Chisholm Fund, for congregations and missions in Saskatchewan and western Canada needing assistance for small capital projects or programs; the Special Project Fund, for non-congregational ministries seeking assistance with small projects; and the McBain/Barker Small Community Capital Fund, for congregations in small communities seeking assistance with small capital improvements to church buildings. Applications and conditions for each fund are available upon request. Contact Mathew Goslinski at mgoslins@presbyterian.ca for more information. *–AM, PCConnect*

Offering Sanctuary

A Pakistani family has been living in a Winnipeg church since the fall. BY ERIN JOY

THE SIGN OUTSIDE THE CHURCH lists what most signs say: the times of both the Sunday service and the usual seasonal greeting. Underneath, however, on the last line it says simply, "Sanctuary Week 23."

The concept of sanctuary comes from Numbers 35:13, 15 in which God directs Moses to establish six cities of refuge. During the Middle Ages, providing sanctuary in churches became a common practice that continued until the 15th and 16th centuries. At some point it was deemed illegal and died out. Later still, governments began to protect refugees themselves. In today's day and age, however, governments are becoming more and more exclusive in their immigration policies and many people are left with nowhere to turn.

On August 3, 2006, a family of eight was to be deported from Winnipeg to Pakistan. Friends of the Raza/Kausar family called church after church looking for a place of sanctuary. The first church to respond affirmatively was Crescent Fort Rouge United Church. The family arrived an hour before they were to be deported and since then has been living in one room of the church (with access to other areas when they are not in use). As this is being written, the Razas have been in sanctuary for more than 150 days, unable to leave the church building.

The Razas have been in sanctuary for more than 150 days, unable to leave the church building

The Razas fear they will face extreme religious persecution if they return to Pakistan. The father, Hassan Raza, is a Shia Muslim while the mother, Sarfraz Kausar, is a Sunni Muslim. Pakistan is predominantly Sunni. The family came to the United States in 1998 but left after the events of Sept. 11, 2001, due to persecution. They have been in Canada for the past four years. Canada's federal court refused their claim for refugee status and began steps to deport them. Two of the Raza's six children were born in Canada and are Canadian citizens.

The 132nd General Assembly adopted a recommendation from the Life And Mission Agency stating, "Should a congregation of The Presbyterian Church in Canada desiring in obedience with God's word and its own conscience, offer sanctuary to an asylum seeker whose claim for refugee status has been rejected and who faces a risk of persecution if returned to his/her country of origin, it may consider [a list of steps to follow]," thus allowing churches to consider sanctuary for those who come to them in need.

As a Young Adult Representative at last year's General Assembly, I felt strongly about the idea of sanctuary but had no real-life experience to base it on. Last fall however, I attended a benefit concert on behalf of the Raza family and was able to hear first-hand the importance of sanctuary. As I sat in the church pew listening to the music I realized that I was proud to be a part of a church that supports sanctuary, proud to be a part of a church that stands up for what I believe is right even when it is standing against the majority. As governments come and go and policies change, the church must take a stand for the principles and values of Jesus Christ.

Erin Joy is a member of Trinity, Winnipeg.

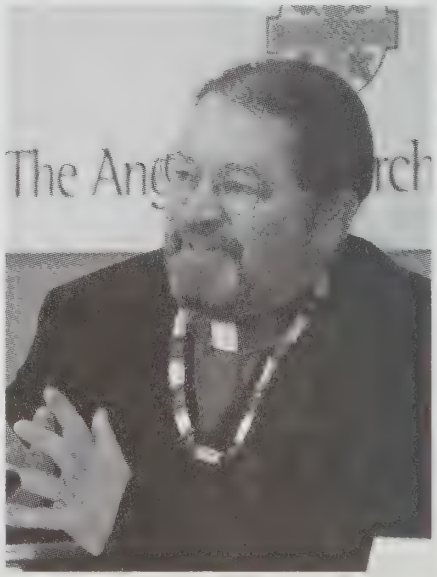
Indigenous Appointment

MARK L. MACDONALD, former bishop of Alaska, has been named the Anglican Church's first national indigenous bishop with pastoral oversight over all native Anglicans across Canada, a move that was described by Archbishop Andrew Hutchison, as "an historic moment" for the life of the Anglican Church of Canada and the country.

"This has been the fruit of our elders' dreams … It's a new day, an exciting moment," said MacDonald.

The appointment was formally announced by Hutchison in January. MacDonald assumes his three-year post this month. Based in Toronto, he said his first priority would be to learn as much as he can about issues affecting native Anglicans, noting that his job would involve much travel and consultations with native communities across Canada, in urban areas and reserves.

A non-status Indian, MacDonald has native ancestry from both his mother's and father's sides of the family and said he grew up among the Ojibway people. *–Anglican Journal*



No Sweat Manitoba

THE GOVERNMENT OF MANITOBA is the first Canadian province to adopt the No Sweat purchasing policy for its apparel suppliers. The November decision means suppliers will have to meet minimum labour standards in the production of bulk-purchased apparel products.

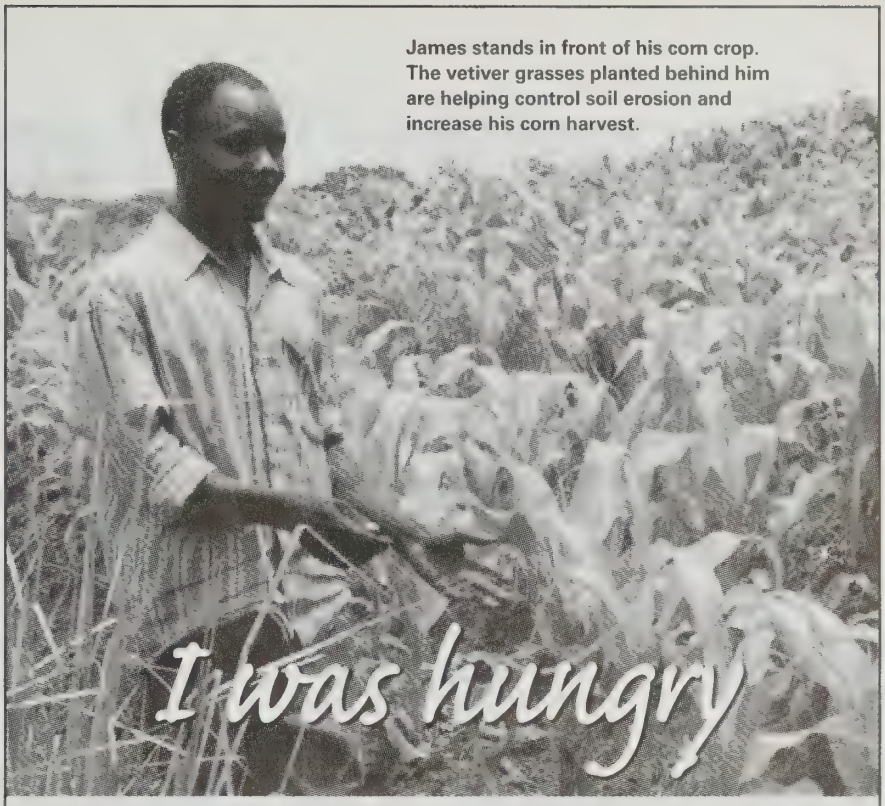
"This is a major step forward toward protecting the most vulnerable workers who produce apparel around the world," said Kevin Thomas, a spokesperson for the Ethical Trading Action Group. KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, which is supported by the Presbyterian Church, is a member of the group.

The new rules will help ensure items are manufactured in compliance with local laws and a set of minimum labour standards including no forced labour, no child labour, freedom of association, health and safety, no employment discrimination and adherence to employment standards such as wages, compensation and hours of work. On average, the province spends between $1.3- and $1.6-million annually on clothing and apparel.

–AM with files from the Government of Manitoba, Maquila Solidarity Network and the Ethical Trading Action Group.

Givings are Up

THE NUMBERS ARE IN and the news is good. Donations to Presbyterians Sharing in 2006 totaled $8,757,577—an increase of almost $85,000 from the previous year. "Thanks to all the congregations across Canada," said Annemarie Klassen, associate secretary for Stewardship and Education for Mission. Twenty-one per cent of the total amount came in during the first two weeks of January, which is consistent with previous patterns. "It is always amazing to see this support from congregations across the country—from congregations both small and large," said Klassen. "God has blessed us richly in the abundance of these gifts, and in the ministry of the church. Let us not take this for granted." *-AM*



James stands in front of his corn crop. The vetiver grasses planted behind him are helping control soil erosion and increase his corn harvest.

BHIALAM, PWS&D

James Chimaliro is a farmer in northern Malawi. Each year he struggles to grow enough to feed his family. With help from The Development Department of Livingstonia Synod and PWS&D, James is learning how to use locally available resources to increase his production of corn. By using crop residue and vertier grass to improve soil and water conservation James has doubled his production of corn. James can now grow enough food to feed his family for ten months, reducing the number of months that he has to sell charcoal to buy food from four to two. In addition, vegetable seeds provided by the Synod and PWS&D are helping the family get the essential vitamins and minerals needed in their diet. In Malawi, where chronic hunger and malnutrition are all too common, this is a big step towards ending hunger.

Help end hunger. Support PWS&D.

PWS&D's relief and development programs operate because people and congregations financially support the work. PWS&D receives no funds from *Presbyterians Sharing*... Make a donation in the name of another and PWS&D will send a *Gift of Hope* card to them on your behalf.

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A Gospel for the Marginalized

Taiwanese find parallels between the Bible and indigenous roots.

BY MARY LOU JOHNSTON AND GEOFF JOHNSTON

Kumu Tapas is a Sediq woman, a third generation Christian. She is heir to the Christian tradition in the mountains of Taiwan. The situation of the mountain people is similar to that of the first nations of Canada.

She explained how the stories of the Old Testament could be related to the cultural ideas of the Sediq tribe: proof that there can be a positive relation between the gospel and her culture. In both, an unseen divinity existing outside the human world is revealed, the formless God is sacred and untouchable and while the spiritual space of the Sediq people is a sacred hill, the Hebrew Bible also refers to sacred spaces. The struggle in which the Sediq god became their saviour is similar to the salvation of the Hebrews from Egypt and it was felt that these stories must be celebrated and passed on to each generation. Christianity has already taken over from the original Wawa system, which has almost disappeared, but the present mixed culture has new aspects and people have greater meaning in their lives. The people have regained their right to interpret their history and thus build up their dignity and confidence as a people.

Walis Ukan, a professor of Hebrew at Yu Shan College, and an evangelist in a Sediq congregation for nine years, explored these and other ideas, bridging the gulf between Christianity and indigenous beliefs. He uses Sediq Mbenowah dance to interpret the Jonah story from the Hebrew Bible. Tapas explains how the music and the dance could reflect God's command to Jonah, the rolling sea, Jonah being swallowed by the great fish and all the aspects of the familiar story.

In the history of the Christian mission to Taiwan's aboriginal tribes, cross-textural interpretation has occurred continuously. For example, the image of the traditional female shaman was projected onto female evangelists. They replaced shamans to bring healing. Kumu feels it is important for aboriginal Christians to have a dialogue between the two traditions and to restore self-identity in the tribe. As she said, "It is essential for recognizing God's grace among histories of nations." With Kumu we see the contextualization of the gospel, not into the dominant society of the time, but into the world of a marginalized people.

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A Fireman in Sudan

A bit of Can-do and he's building a school with child soldiers. BY ANGUS MCKENZIE



I work for the City of London Fire Department and my captain on Engine 11 is Glen Pearson, Director of the London Food Bank and former missionary. Having served for many years in Africa, Glen and his wife Jane Roy are currently assisting the people of South Sudan. This is an area suffering the results of 25 years of civil war.

One day, Glen told of receiving funding to build a new school in South Sudan, but there was no one in the area with the skills to handle the type of construction required and he did not know what he was going to do.

We responded with, "We could do that!" Four of us, Rob Warren, John Peter, Steven Beasley and I had also gone from London to New York City after 9/11. We are all on the same squad and regularly work together on emergency calls.

After a winter of fundraising we departed a year ago in January. Also, in our group was London businessman, Alex Lau, who is involved with a SmartAid project to provide sewing machines and training to the women of the area; Shaun Elliot, regional director of the YMCA wanted to set up "Y" programs for the youth; Jeff Lang of Stevenson Hunt was along as a member of SmartAid; and Kathy Mueller from the A Channel with cameraman Wayne Jennings to document our efforts. Jane Roy of Canadian Aid for Southern Sudan was with us to co-ordinate everything and was accompanied by her adopted daughter Abuk (who is from the area). London developer David Tennant and his nephew, London police officer Bill Tennant were already in the area working on a SmartAid project.

The four firefighters focused on construction of the school and we had our hands full dealing with the logistical concerns of finding necessary resources and getting them to the building site. Our agenda proved to be overly ambitious. No water or aggregate for concrete. A one hour drive to find each resource and we required enough of each to mix two cement trucks' worth. And the stones for aggregate were too large and had to be pounded with a hammer to reduce them to usable size. No handles

No handles for the tools. No bolts to put the steel structure together

for the tools. No bolts to put the steel structure together. Four flimsey shovels to dig several hundred feet. Choosing a site which had the least number of bomb craters.

Then dealing with a labour dispute which arose because the Sudanese thought we were being paid and so taking much needed jobs away from them.

All of this was sorted out agreeably and much was accomplished.

Everyone became ill at some point during the week, proving true the young Slovakian physician's catchphrase, "Welcome to Sudan, don't eat anything for two days."

The men known as the Child Soldiers of Sudan worked with us and we all became great friends as we laboured, side by side and learned about each others lives.

As half of our allowable luggage on the journey we had each brought 25 kilograms of supplies to leave at the mission. I had a hockey equipment bag full of YMCA T-shirts, and some of our fellows had medical supplies, tools and deflated balls for soccer and basketball. All of this was dispensed in the community, with much excitement.

During my stay I became good friends with a soldier named Simon and met his wife and family. I gave him a radio powered by a hand-crank dynamo and I believe this radio quickly became Simon's most prized possession.

The generosity of the members of Knox, St. Thomas, allowed me to reach out to help people who have nowhere to turn for any type of aid or relief. For their support I am ever grateful. The people of Aweil East are also thankful.

Angus McKenzie is a member of Knox, St. Thomas, Ont.



From the brink 1

ENI–"We are at a point of no return," said Bishop Wolfgang Huber, who heads the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), the country's main Protestant grouping. He was speaking to more than 300 delegates from throughout Germany gathered in Wittenberg, the town where Martin Luther launched the Reformation five centuries ago, to consider how to strengthen the profile of Protestantism in Germany.

The EKD has said that if it does not act now, then by 2030 it will have lost a third of its members and 50 percent of its income. Currently there are about 25 million Protestants, or less than a third of Germany's 82 million people, within the EKD.

"At the centre of all Reformation has to be the Sunday service," Huber stated in a speech. "We have to concentrate on our spiritual capacity and our Christian mission," he said, noting that preaching was at the centre of Luther's message.

From the brink 2

ENI–"Ecumenism in the Protestant Church in the Netherlands is not dead, but it is seriously ill. It is so ill that, if I were to stay on, I too would get ill," Rev. Wies Houweling said two days after announcing her resignation from the WCC central committee. She resigned from the main governing body of the World Council of Churches, saying the spirit of Christian unity in her own denomination is in crisis. Her decision followed the withdrawal of the denomination's development aid program, Kerkinactie, from United Civilians for Peace, a group working to promote an end to the Israel-Palestinian conflict. Kerkinactie had gained a reputation of being "one-sidedly pro-Palestinian."

Police abuse powers

ENI–Zimbabwe police have been accused of abusing power after the arrest of eight church leaders, including a blind pastor, for holding a meeting without first seeking approval. "The use of armed police to disrupt a religious meeting is a clear abuse of power and authority by the police," said the Christian Alliance, a grouping of churches, opposition political groups, human rights organizations and civil society in the southern African country.

The alliance said: "The continued harassment of Christian Alliance leadership by state agents is cause for concern to the Christian community at large as this infringes on freedom of worship, expression and association."

Troop surge immoral

ENI–The U.S. National Council of Churches, a long-standing critic of US military involvement in Iraq, has criticized President Bush's call for additional American troops to be sent to the region. "Sending more troops is not a change in policy, nor is it even a change in strategy; it is more of the same," the NCC said in a statement about the president's declaration that he wants to increase the number of troops in Iraq by 21,500.

The church group described the call for more troops as "morally unsupportable." There are currently about 130,000 American troops in Iraq. "The surge as recommended by the president is immoral," the group asserted. "What we do not need is an assertion of more military strength. What we need is the strength of basic moral conviction."

Baptists reunite

ENI– Former presidents Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton are backing a new grouping of Baptists in a centrist organization that will tackle broader social issues and counter a perceived image of the Southern Baptist Convention as an exclusionary church. At the same time the new grouping has invited the Southern Baptists to its foundation convention a year from now.

"This is a historic event for the Baptists in this country and perhaps for Christianity," Carter said in January. The organization, which includes about 40 Baptist groups, plans to hold its first convocation next January.

Carter left the Southern Baptists in 2000 after the denomination came under the control of leaders considered politically conservative.

"Our goal is to have a major demonstration of harmony and a common commitment to personifying and to accomplish the goals that Jesus Christ expressed," Carter said.

Organizers say the 2008 event could draw more than 20,000 Baptists. Among the groups supporting the effort are several historically black Baptist denominations.

Show the money

ENI– Rev. Ishmael Noko, a world Lutheran leader, says that if the international community wants the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement for south Sudan to hold, it must meet financial pledges agreed to when the pact was signed. "When the Sudan conference took place, there were pledges made. Lots of money was promised and not much has been done," Noko, who is general secretary of the Geneva-based Lutheran World Federation, told journalists in Nairobi. "If the international community really wants the peace to hold in southern Sudan and the tensions not to return again, then it needs to do something."

Signed in January 2005 between the government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army, the peace agreement halted one of Africa's longest and bloodiest conflicts, which pitted the mainly Christian and animist south against the Muslim north.

"A lot of blood was spilled which was unnecessary, and I think we will stand judged for allowing the situation to deteriorate," Noko said.

Seeing and Believing

We have to beware of sugary visions of seventh heavens. BY WILL INGRAM

We are told that seeing is believing which is interesting for those of us who are 'believers' living in a 'seeing' culture. We live in one of the most visually-based cultures in human history. Television has become the way that we see the world and filter truth.

So what is this 'television age' telling us about ourselves? Well, it seems to suggest that we live in a Lost world in which people have replaced the dignity and joy of intimacy for meaningless Sex in the City before becoming Desperate Housewives in the suburbs; a world where the closest that we can come to a Family Guy is a cartoon caricature; and where the most functional families are The Sopranos and The Simpsons. Even though all major faiths discourage idol worship, millions of people participate in finding the latest Canadian Idol.

Who wouldn't want to make a Prison Break from such a society? And if this is the best that we can do, is it worth pondering whether we are all being lulled into a state of moral and intellectual Arrested Development before we all find ourselves Six Feet Under?

I am not against television. But I sometimes fear that we are insufficiently aware of the ways that television affects the way that we see the world, and the way we see other people. We need to constantly remind ourselves, in this image-filtered world, that not all Muslims are gun-toting terrorists; not all gay people are promiscuous pride paraders; not all Christians in the U.S. are narrow minded, anti-gay, anti-science, right-wing Republicans; not all liberals are wishy-washy flakes who lack convictions; not all fundamentalists are violent hate-mongers; not all politicians are corrupt; and not all Africans are poor and hungry.

Is it any wonder that some people feel that their vision might be a bit confused, perhaps even wrong?



Like blind Bartimaeus, who desperately wanted Jesus to cure his vision, there are many people who long to recover a proper perspective on the world, and who suspect that Jesus might be able to help them to see.

What I fear, however, is that there are times when we in the church, like the crowds who got in Bartimaeus' way, might tend to get in the way. After all, there are many in our culture who have no problem with Jesus, but who have a large—and sometimes legitimate—problem with the church. And they find it hard to see Jesus because the church is blocking the view.

They know Jesus calls for unity, but all they see is a church divided. They know that Jesus calls for forgiveness, but all they see is judgement. They know Jesus calls for peace, but all they see is a church plagued by conflicts. They know Jesus calls for concern for the poor, but all they see is a church which does little to redistribute wealth. They know Jesus calls us to love our enemies, but all they see is a church that has, too often, supported the use of terrible violence. They know Jesus calls for grace, but all they see is a church that is the outspoken defender of exclusive and intolerant ideas. They know Jesus calls people to an abundant life, but all they see is a church that calls people to support the anachronistic expressions of an outdated cultural institution.

Please don't misunderstand me. I desperately love the church. I can honestly confess that I believe in the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. I believe that the church proclaims a message that is the hope of the world; and that the church is the most compassionate community on the face of the earth.

But we must acknowledge that there are times when the church gets in the way of those seeking Jesus. And we must remember that the church is simply meant to be a movement of people with Jesus 'on the way,' sent out into this world to live and to proclaim the good news of God's love for this world. When we seem more interested in safeguarding our congregational or denominational survival than we do in helping people to catch sight of Christ, we must question whether we are getting in the way of helping people to 'see' the way into the House of many mansions by encouraging them, instead, to keep their eyes on a false vision of some sugary 7th Heaven.

This is severely excerpted from Ingram's sermon of October 29, 2006. The whole sermon can be found at morningsidehighpark.com.





Grant Us Wisdom

Notes from the front lines of the progressive church.

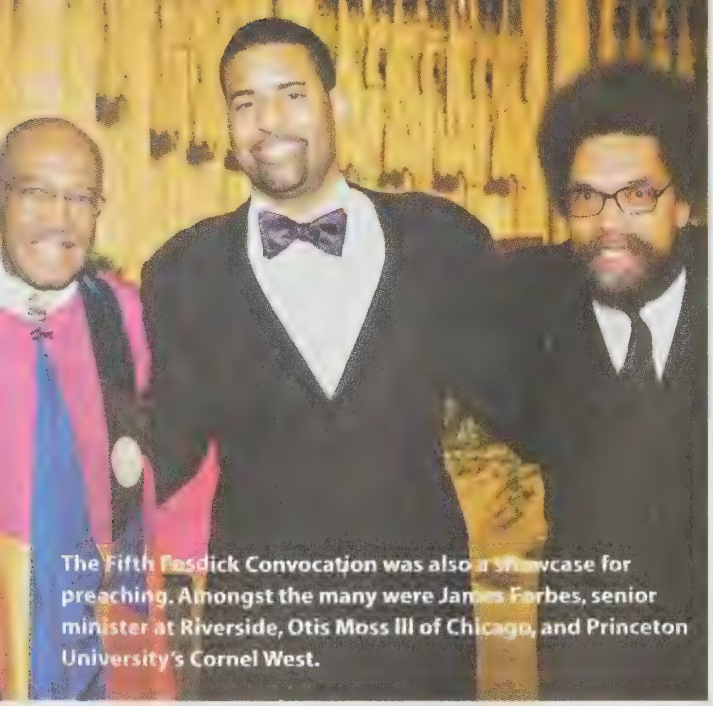
BY ANDREW FAIZ

God of grace and God of glory.
On Thy people pour Thy power;
Crown Thine ancient church's story,
Bring her bud to glorious flower,
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
For the facing of this hour.
(Charles Emerson Fosdick, Book of Praise, 490)

Two and a half years ago I got a call from a woman who told me she was a life-long member of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. She was crying. She said she had been promoting a mission agency that has no association with the church. And, that she had been told if she continued to promote this agency in the church she would no longer be welcome as a member. I tried to get more information from her: who had told her this? Was it an official statement from Session? Or was it a comment made by somebody at coffee time? She continued crying; telling me she gave generously to the church and to Presbyterian mission works but also liked this other agency.

I think of her often, and she came particularly to mind last October as I spent a week in New York City at a conference at the legendary Riverside Church. By the second day at the Fifth Fosdick Convocation, as the conference was named, I knew the woman who had cried to me on the phone would find some solace there, because in a way the conference was directed to her. Whether she knows it or not, she is caught in some changes that are rumbling in the near distance, close to the already precarious existence of mainline churches. She is, in her own way, thinking of what church means, and means to her.

Her spiritual needs—and her needs for community—exceed those her church can ▶



The Fifth Fosdick Convocation was also a showcase for preaching. Amongst the many were James Forbes, senior minister at Riverside, Otis Moss III of Chicago, and Princeton University's Cornel West.

provide; or manages currently to provide. Simultaneously, it is true that her church, in this case our church, does not want to fail her, wants to keep her in the family. But, somehow, their mutual conversation is broken, and her church can no longer rely merely on her denominational loyalty. Since each situation is specific, it is difficult to determine why her church is not meeting her needs, but it is obvious, if nothing else, that her home congregation is not a safe place to share ideas.

"There are a whole bunch of people out there who are looking for different stuff in relationship to their Christian life," Diana Butler Bass told the assembled at the convocation, in sharing the findings in her book *Christianity for the Rest of Us: How the Neighbourhood Church is Transforming the Faith*. "They're looking for a safe place in which to ask questions."

Butler Bass's book is a look at the success secrets of 50 growing neighbourhood churches across the States. (The book is reviewed later in these pages.) The secrets she discovered in her research are all, in a way, self-evident; but also shocking, since they demand what we assume our churches should provide: community and safety. What she calls "an architecture of vitality" is really a simplifying of the Christian experience with a greater emphasis on spiritual development.

She spoke of three pieces of scaffolding that make up this particular architecture: a return to Christian tradition and history; a return to Christian practices like hospitality, healing and forgiveness, and devotional practices like centering prayer and Benedictine hours; and a yearning for wisdom. "We saw that these congregations had a goal; that they were aiming for something; that they were on a quest," Butler Bass said. "And the quest was for wisdom. Wisdom is a sort of open-ended quality of the Christian intellectual life. A kind of humble knowing of God. Wisdom is not elitist, it is not secret, it is not esoteric and it is not impractical. It also creates open community. If people are on a quest for wisdom, they are going to be able to be their truest selves. There's not going to be a phoniness or a put-on-ness about the church; rather, people simply living into the Christian story, trying to do that with as much honesty and integrity as possible."

Yes, of course, that is the church; but, that is not necessarily our church, not necessarily our congregation. We may individually strive for, might even collectively reach for, wisdom and community, but we often settle for comfort. Why is that?

The Riverside Church regards itself as, and is often thought of as, the national and international home of liberal or progressive Christianity. Some of the leading liberal preachers of the past century have stood at its pulpit: Hans Kung, Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela and Dietrich Bonhoeffer; along with President Clinton, Paul McCartney, Harry Belafonte and the Dalai Lama. William Sloane Coffin was once the senior minister. Charles Emerson Fosdick was the founding minister. (Coffin was ordained a Presbyterian minister; Fosdick served seven years at a Presbyterian church before Riverside.) In many ways the Fifth Fosdick Convocation at the Riverside Church was a gathering of the progressive church leaders and preachers. And, in many ways the one question that hovered throughout the whole conference was: What Happened? What happened to the mainline church; what happened to the liberal—progressive—church?

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Cure Thy children's warring madness,
Bend our pride to Thy control.
Shame our wanton selfish gladness,
Rich in things and poor in soul.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
Lest we miss Thy kingdom's goal.
(Charles Emerson Fosdick, Book of Praise, 490)

"We weren't paying any attention to what was happening locally," said Rev. Dr. Joan Brown Campbell. "The religious right was quietly and doggedly, at the local level, winning local elections, putting people on local school boards, and getting people elected as local precinct committee people [for decades]."

Campbell, former general secretary of the National Council of Churches USA and currently director of the department of religion at the Chautauqua Institution, went on: "The progressive movement was very national. We had little and not enough recognition of the meaning and importance of the congregation in the life of the national ecumenical movement. The voice of progressive Christianity then gave only token representation to the local scene."

The mainline and progressive churches did not develop their congregations or their communities. They didn't need to—their numbers were solid, until suddenly, by the end of the last century, the numbers were small, and in many congregations the quest was diminished. The members were tired, likely aged, and quite content with their status quo.

"I think for us in the [progressive] churches, the one thing that we just couldn't do …" Barbara Lundblad said at the opening plenary. "We couldn't hold together deeply religious, passiona-

tely Christian language and social justice in a way that those two had been held together by the civil rights movement, and particularly by Dr. King." Lundblad is associate professor of preaching at Union Theological Seminary, directly across the street from Riverside Church. "In some way we ceded religious language to those who we now might perceive to be on the other side. We left a vacant space that was filled by a language that we now wish we could claim more for ourselves."

The opening plenary where Lundblad and Campbell spoke live in the church, along with Coffin and Kung via pre-recorded video, was in many ways the most interesting session of the conference. Here were four warriors of the progressive Christian movement whose memories stretched back to the Fifties; to Selma, to Mississippi. I found the session jarring in many ways—the civil rights movement is no longer on my radar. Though I am a late Boomer, King was dead by my teens. Even the seminal events of my youth—Vietnam, Watergate, FLQ, etc.—are ancient history to my generation. Yet, Kung made several references to the era of Camelot and president John F. Kennedy. Others told stories about King. (In the Canadian context we may well speak of Pierre Trudeau and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.)

The great success of the left, of liberal Christians, encouraged and aided by the mainline denominations, was to challenge institutions—governments, laws and even churches. In their stead they built ecumenical and inter-faith coalitions. And, along the way, either chasing secular society or leading it, they affirmed the rights of various minorities, and in the case of women, a long-silenced majority. It was for that reason the civil rights movement was constantly in the memory of the opening speakers: it was an egregious undeniable injustice that was battled in the streets, in restaurants, in homes and in legislatures. And in its wake the participants began to wonder about others who are equally subjected to social, cultural, political and legal injustices. Therefore, even though the passion is no less reduced, the aim no less noble, the methods no less valid, the focus is greatly diffused. The battle for social change still rages on many fronts, but lacks a single leader or issue. (Nelson Mandela may well have been the last coalescing personality, along with Bishop Desmond Tutu.)

"I was thinking over the last week," Lundblad said, "about the things we didn't know in 1978 [at the first Fosdick Convocation].

"We didn't know about a disease called AIDS. The Berlin Wall was still up. Liberation theology was still very new. And, practically 90 per cent of the books [by feminist scholars] were written since 1978; so those voices were just beginning to be heard." To the list Joan Campbell added that the inter-faith movement was also just beginning. "Muslim," she said. "Muslim? No one even talked of Muslims." And "gay rights, just emerging."

The kingdom's goal, to use Fosdick's phrase, was never as cleanly defined after the civil rights movement. And, of course, in the opaque foreground of this nostalgia trip hovered the current American president and the war in Iraq. Therefore the conversation constantly shifted—seamlessly—between the global and national movements and the local church. Coffin, in addressing this What Happened question, was true to his life-long ministry, blunt in his response. Interestingly, in answering the big question, he turned his thoughts to the congregation. He highlighted two fears that have kept pastors from developing the local scene. "[Ministers] are so needy that they need the love of the congregation and will not do anything that will jeopardize it. It's supposed to be that our faith comes from God, our support comes from God and we love our congregations, but we're not supposed to depend on their thinking well of us. That's not why we go into the ministry.

"And, then there's fear of confrontation." Coffin was filmed three weeks prior to his death last May. His speech was slow and tongue-heavy; his words slurred, yet the zeal that made him an important Christian leader for decades was obvious. "Starting as Christian ministers we learn that compassion demands confrontation. Often. Thank you, Jesus. And thank you, Martin Luther King. Thank you, Gandhi. Often, compassion demands confrontation; but, anytime we let a demeaning comment go unchallenged, we are being dishonest. Morally. Intellectually."

***

Save us from weak resignation,
To the evils we deplore.
Let the search for Thy salvation,
Be our glory evermore.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
Serving Thee Whom we adore.

"You never know what Tony is going to say," Barbara Harris told me, referring to Tony Campolo who was to speak later that morning. She and I were standing outside the church on a crisp October morning, sharing our joint addictions for nicotine and caffeine. The grand edifice of the church rose several stories beside us. Occupying a solid city block, there is nothing modest about the Riverside Church. There is also nothing modest about the Rt. Rev. Harris, a diminutive African-American woman in her eighth decade, who was the first female Episcopal bishop in the worldwide Anglican communion. Still, both of these legends—the church and the bishop—presented themselves as average and approachable (that's New York for you). And, as if to prove the point, Harris told me a famous off-colour story about Campolo:

He was speaking to a conservative church. From the pulpit he told the austere congregation, "I have three things I'd like to say today. First, while you were sleeping last night, 30,000 kids died of starvation or diseases related to malnutrition. Second, most of you don't give a [darn]. Third, what's worse is that you're more upset with the fact that I said [darn] than the fact that 30,000 kids died last night."

Tony Campolo is an animated personality, a popular speaker, a Baptist minister and professor emeritus of sociology at Eastern University in Pennsylvania. He is also a leading proponent of the Emergent Church movement. He challenges the church—as the story above proves—to return to its biblical roots. Campolo thinks of himself as an evangelical; he comes from that ▶



background. So, in developing a new theology for a new age he moves back, through Christian history and tradition and practice, back to the basics, back to the words spoken by Christ.

"I always ask my students a very simple thing," Campolo spoke from the Riverside pulpit. "Why did Jesus come to earth? If Jesus were to write a mission statement, how would it read? I get all kinds of answers: He came to save the lost; He came to reconcile us to God; He came to reveal God; He came to show us what it means to be an actualized human being. And on and on and on, but I never get the answer. The answer that I know Jesus would have given. Jesus would say I've come to declare that the kingdom of God is at hand. All of His parables were about the kingdom. When He taught His disciples to pray, He said 'Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done ...' Where?

"It's not pie in the sky when you die by and by! But the same Christ who prepares for us a place beyond the sky has come into this world to create a people through whom He wants to change the [physical] world into the kingdom. The last thing He says to His disciples before the Ascension, He tells them again the things concerning the kingdom."

Brian McLaren, another leading writer in the Emergent movement, also speaks of the kingdom. "There is an entire Christian theology about escaping the earth and abandoning it. The goal is for the earth to be left behind. If this is the case, we really should edit the Lord's Prayer once and for all—not 'Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.' Instead He should have taught us to pray, 'May we go to your kingdom in heaven, where, unlike earth, Your will is done.' Theologies that focus on escaping the earth, abandoning the earth, are ways in which we sabotage the kingdom of God.

"We can also miss the goal through a domesticated church. A church of civil religion, a church that submits itself to the powers of this world, a church that is very happy to say prayers and benedictions but never really interjects the Word of the Lord into the world's agenda. This is a way we can miss the kingdom's goal.

"And then there's the intention to celebrate the kingdom, to sing about the kingdom, but we don't actually do anything about it. Sooner or later we have to translate all the singing and talking into real action. Our churches have to be made into communities that create disciples of Jesus. By disciples, we don't just mean converts, we don't just mean believers, we don't just mean churchgoers. We actually mean people who are learning to live in the way of Jesus.

"We desperately need disciples of Jesus and not just adherents to a religion called Christianity."

In short, to quote the title of a book by Marcus Borg, McLaren is talking about meeting Jesus again for the first time. Though institutions ossify, grow heavy under the weight of their own bureaucracy, Christianity has an incredible capacity to reinvent itself. And in many ways that's all the Emergent movement is, a reinvention of the member as a disciple. (A feature interview with McLaren will appear in next month's *Record*.) It returns to the prime documents—what Campolo calls "the red letters"—for a fresh motivation.

And those documents say the same thing they always have. "I think we've gotten away from what Jesus was all about," Campolo told the gathered at the Riverside Church for the Fosdick Convocation. (The majority of those present, incidentally, were clergy, including five from The Presbyterian Church in Canada.) "For instance, the Beatitudes, now there's a revolutionary piece. 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, i.e., blessed are they who empathize with the poor, whose spiritual connectedness with the poor is such that it overwhelms them. In the end, Jesus makes it clear that on Judgment Day we will be judged on how we respond to the poor."

Tony Campolo is a teacher and a preacher and a good performer—in the best sense—in the pulpit. Barbara Harris told me he doesn't always have a prepared speech or sermon, that he might have notes upon which he improvises. His mind is active, and it is difficult to capture his rhythms on the printed page. But, as I excerpt this portion of his sermon, I want to emphasize how he switches from speaking of the "red letters" —the words spoken by Jesus—to the theological interpretations of those same passages, and back to the words of Christ.

"I wish this were theological, because I'm in if it were theological. Now I can just imagine on Judgment Day St. Peter saying to me, 'Okay, now, Campolo, a couple of questions. Virgin Birth: strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree?' I wish these were the questions. I'm in!

"They're not the questions. Here's the questions: I was hungry, did you feed me? Naked, did you clothe me? Sick, did you care for me? I was a stranger, I was an alien, I came over the border from Mexico, did you take me in? For if you fail to do unto the least of these, my brothers and sisters, you fail to do it unto me.

"St. Francis of Assisi made it clear that the poor and the oppressed of the world are sacramental. That coming through them is the real presence of the living Christ."

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Set our feet on lofty places,
Gird our lives that they may be,
Armored with all Christ-like graces,
In the fight to set men free.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
That we fail not man nor Thee.

Sam Wells is a quiet man, who speaks softly, and with great care, in the pulpit and privately. And perhaps because he was the only non-American to speak at the convocation, and perhaps because he is British (though Canadian by birth), the Canadian Presbyterians immediately glommed on to him. Wells is the dean of Duke Chapel, in North Carolina. A relatively young man to hold such a lofty position, he is thoughtful with his words. He exudes a warm pastoral care that does not negate his obvious intellect. In terms of presentation, he is as different from Campolo as one could get, but he is no less powerful. His message moved many, some to tears.

He spoke of a young couple going through a very difficult period in their lives—anticipating the birth of a seriously ill child—that made them question their own faith and strength. They were at a crossroads in their marriage and their journey of faith—like so many of us in our lives. Wells preached: "And then Jesus said, 'It is I.' I am the new temple, the place of encounter with God. And Ephesians 2 tells us, You, You plural, are the temple, the church. The dwelling place for God. The place of encounter. Not you as individuals. Not you as the state. But you as the church. You as the church of transformed identity. You as the church of unity. You as the church, one body with the Jews. You the church embodying the politics of abundance. You are the place where others will see the glory of God.

"Let's come back to that graduate couple with their nightmare pregnancy. I sense they represent the heart of this convocation. What they need is what we need. What they need for facing the future is what we need for the living of these days. And what we need is the church. They have legislation and technology but it is not helping them. They need a congregation small enough and disciplined enough that a pastor can stand up and say, 'I think God is asking us what we are made of.'

"They need a church that is already in the process of addressing diversity and difference in ways that respect conviction and challenge privilege, that exhibits patience and can't imagine not being one body. They need a church that knows it is called to become a new community. They need a church that is able to receive the gifts of God, even gifts as misshapen and distressing as the Cross, in a spirit of hope that does not underwrite an ideology of scarcity but embodies God's overflowing abundance. And in all these things they will discover true worship because they will have met the true God who promised in the word Emmanuel never to leave us alone."

***

Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
Serving Thee whom we adore,
Serving Thee whom we adore.

We are the church, and the church is both big and small, and it always has to maintain that balance. I haven't heard from that woman since the afternoon she called. Nobody could blame her if she has left her church, of course. But I hope she did stick it out, that she helped her church turn around. From my role as an editorial staff of this publication I daily encounter magnificent stories of local congregations who reach far beyond their boundaries. Who work hard at self-education and then work harder still at applying that reaffirmed faith.

There is one curious thing many of them have in common: they feel alone. They feel alone in their sorrows, like the woman who called me. They feel alone in their joys, as if no other congregation is acting through its mandate.

The one thing I learned, again and for the first time, at the Fifth Fosdick Convocation is that through our highs and our lows we are never alone. And, one thing I can assert through the experience of my day job—which I often think of as the best window on the life and work of our denomination—is that neither are you.

You can watch all the key speakers at the Fifth Fosdick Convocation online at www.theriversidechurchny.org/getinvolved/?fosdick, till 2008.

St. Andrew's Church
King & Simcoe – Toronto

presents

THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

2007 Lenten Meditations

Feb. 21 – Ash Wednesday
The Rev. Dr. George C. Vais

Feb. 28 – "STANDING WITH OTHERS"
Dr. Rick Fee
Gen. Sec., Life and Mission Agency
The Presbyterian Church in Canada

Mar. 7 – "NO REST FOR THE WEARY"
Rev. Linda Ashfield
Knox Presbyterian Church, Waterloo, ON

Mar. 14 – "ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER"
Rev. Cam Taylor
Retired Presbyterian Minister

Mar. 21 –"REMOVE THIS CUP FROM ME"
Dr. Laura Alary
Instructor, Knox-Ewart Centre
for Lay Education

Mar. 28 – "CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST"
Rev. Duncan Cameron
St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church
Scarborough, ON

Holy Week Meditations:

Apr. 2 – "The High Priest"
Rev. Rodger Hunter
Boarding Homes

Apr. 3 – "Pilate"
Rev. Rodger Hunter
Boarding Homes

Apr. 4 – "The Crowd"
Rev. Rodger Hunter
Boarding Homes

Apr. 5 – HOLY COMMUNION
The Rev. Dr. George C. Vais

Come and observe Lent
and Holy Week with us

12:00 p.m. – Organ Recital
12:15 p.m. – Meditation
12:45 p.m. – Sandwiches

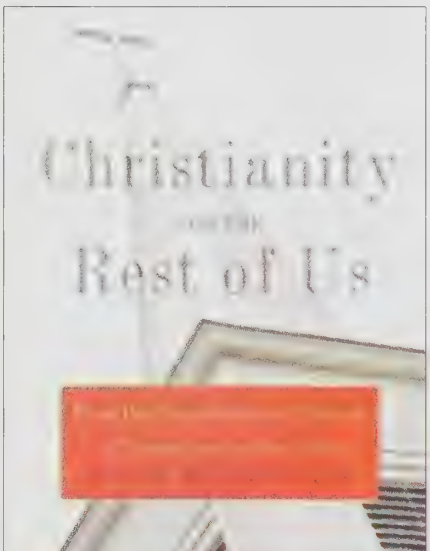


A Place to Call Home

Progressing towards church renewal. BY LYNNE DONOVAN

When I read my first book on mainline church renewal in the early 1990s, the operative phrase was "paradigm shift." Churches were encouraged to develop new models for ministry and mission. It was time to "think outside of the box," to start with a blank page. It was not an exercise that came easily to many churches struggling with grief and diminishing resources.

This round of books on church renewal is descriptive rather than prescriptive. Both Diana Butler Bass and Hal Taussig were on a quest to discover if there were thriving churches outside the conservative, mega-church camp. The conversation is distinctly American set against a backdrop of a country that appears to be sharply divided both politically and theologically. However, their findings are refreshing and helpful, I believe, to our context.



Christianity for the Rest of Us: How the Neighbourhood Church is Transforming the Faith,
Diana Butler Bass. Harper SanFrancisco.

Butler Bass heads in the direction of the mainline churches, not necessarily the biggest church in town but the smaller (by American standards) neighbourhood church which managed to come back from the brink of death; Taussig is on a search for progressive churches, churches that emphasize "creative worship, feminism, gay-friendliness, and new attitudes towards other religions." Neither was disappointed and in the two books there is a wealth of testimony from clergy and lay people participating in resurrection communities.

Taussig explores the progressive church movement born primarily out of urban churches among Christians who are uncomfortable with their own denomination's stance on issues like human sexuality and perspectives on other faiths. The book reads a bit like a textbook on progressive Christianity. While Taussig examines specific congregations, he does not provide the wealth of testimonies, as does Butler Bass. He spends more time articulating the theology behind the principles that shape progressive churches as well as the spiritual practices that shape their worship life, practices that include the use of non-Christian rituals and pay special attention to ecological justice.

Taussig makes it clear that the soil that nurtures progressive Christianity is exclusively urban, middle class and well educated. His critique of the movement is that while it touts itself as being inclusive, it reflects a very narrow demographic. And while those in the movement have practiced courage as they sought to provide an alternative voice within their own denominations (like the "More Light Presbyterians") some have slipped into another kind of spiritual arrogance.

There are those who will find this study to be very exciting and may even be relieved to know that Christians from many denominations have found spiritual homes. There is even a Center for Progressive Spirituality (tcpc.org). However, given both the demographics and the theology of most of our own congregations, it may not provide the tools we are seeking. If, however, you want to learn how hundreds of churches have openly wrestled with ecological issues, the relationship between Christianity and other faith traditions and incorporated these conversations in worship, Taussig's book provides all kinds of illustrations.



Butler Bass's book reads less like a textbook and more like a road map for spiritual transformation. It provides a wealth of first-hand testimonies from lay and clergy alike from mainline churches across the country. Butler Bass and her researchers spent a minimum of three weeks in 10 different congregations and looked less intensively at 40 others. Her

'Congregations love diversity—political, theological, cultural and racial'

book reflects an intimate knowledge of the practices and personalities of these congregations as well as the journeys they undertook to arrive where they are.

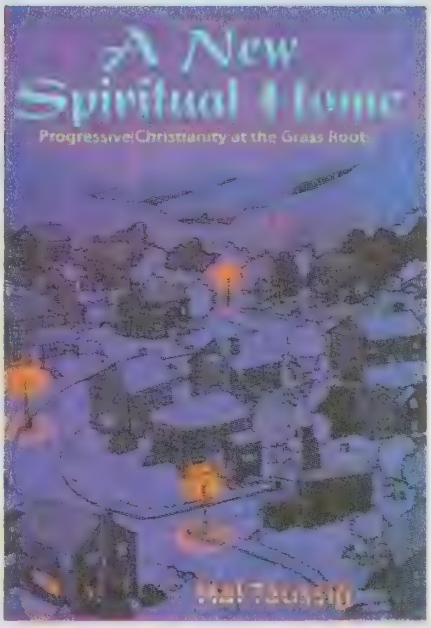
She distills among the life of these congregations 10 practices that have served to move them in the direction of spiritual renewal. There is no dependence on a new program to be found in this book. Instead each church in its own unique way has reclaimed ancient spiritual practices. Butler Bass devotes a chapter to each of the practices and allows the lay people from these congregations to speak about the implications of each practice for their own particular community of faith. The practices include hospitality, discernment, healing, contemplation, testimony, diversity, justice, worship, reflection and beauty.

These chapters are a wonderful resource for congregations and particularly sessions who are seeking to be more faithful to their Christian identity. I think two key discussions are around worship and diversity. Each of these congregations has developed their own distinct approach to worship. Butler Bass discovers that "the kind of music and art does not matter in worship, but innovation and experimentation does." And probably the richness of the testimonies is due to the practice of diversity. "Emerging mainline congregations love diversity of every kind—political, theological, cultural and racial."

But the practice that underlies everything else that these churches undertake is the practice of discernment. Each congregation committed itself to wrestling with two questions: Who are we; and what is God calling us to do? "The churches learned to ask questions of God, then listen carefully for God's inner wisdom for the community." This endeavour has shaped their journey.

What is most exciting about the churches that are described in this book is that, unlike progressive churches, they are Christian communities that manage to bridge the 'classic' political divide that presently exists south of the border. There is diversity around the table and surely this is a testimony to the work of God's spirit. While our divisions may be different, we too need a vision for celebrating diversity within our own congregations.

I have been in my new parish for six



A New Spiritual Home: Progressive Christianity at the Grass Roots, Hal Taussig. Polebridge Press.

days and have already referred to this book in my inaugural sermon and at the first session meeting. In fact, I suggested that we use it as a major resource as we pursue our own conversation of spiritual renewal. Perhaps it's refreshing because it's not new. It's simply back to basics. "Mainline renewal is, as one Lutheran pastor told me, 'not rocket science.' As he said, 'You preach the gospel, offer hospitality and pay attention to worship and people's spiritual lives. Frankly, you take Christianity seriously as a way of life."

Lynne Donovan is minister at St. Andrew's, Picton, Ont.



Participants at Canada Youth 2006 in St. Catharines

Wanted: Excited Christians

Declining congregations are either being pruned for growth, or burned for their failure to grow. BY CAROL ANN KEYS

I know all the things you do, and that you have a reputation for being alive—but you are dead. Wake up! Strengthen what little remains, for even what is left is almost dead. I find that your actions do not meet the requirements of my God. Go back to what you heard and believed at first; hold to it firmly. Repent and turn to me again. If you don't wake up, I will come to you suddenly, as unexpected as a thief.

Revelation 3:1-3

Once upon a time, in a land not so far away, there was a little church of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. This church had a long and proud history in its land, and the people of this church believed that God would bless them for their faithfulness forever. Every Sunday the little congregation gathered to worship its Lord in a dignified and orderly manner. But the years went by and slowly the congregation began to fall asleep, and attendance at the little church started to fall quietly away.

First the younger people left and later the Sunday school shut down. The younger generation was bored and disinterested in what the little church had to offer. The message of the good news of Jesus Christ was not being presented to them in a manner which ignited their interest or held their attention. The culture in the land was changing at a pace unprecedented in its history, but the little congregation insisted that the Lord must be worshipped in the same way. The young people said "Okay," and they registered their kids in Sunday morning hockey or went Sunday shopping or slept in.

The message of the good news of Jesus Christ was not being presented to them in a manner which ignited their interest or held their attention

The people told themselves, "Young people aren't interested in religion, there is nothing we can do." And so one by one the people of the little church grew older and began to die, and soon even the mighty Presbyterian Church Women folded. "What are we to do?" said the session members to each other. "There aren't enough people here to pay our expenses. How will we be able to continue to worship the Lord?"

Two of the elders of the little church joined with their minister to form a committee of session, which grew to include three more people from the congregation. They were charged with finding a solution to this problem. Faithful servants of the Lord, they worked tirelessly to find the clues they needed, and after many months of searching they reported back. "We have sought a vision from God," they said, "and this is what He told us: We need to open the doors of our little church to everyone in the land. We need to meet the people at the level of their culture and at their point of greatest need, and then we need to deliver the good news of Jesus Christ to them in a way they will enjoy and understand. We need to reach out to everyone in this land, young and old, rich and poor, and be the example of Jesus Christ in word and deed. We need to show our land that this little church has a purpose, and a mission, and that we are ready, able and willing to act on it. We need to explain to everyone in the land who we are, and why we are here, and tell them and show them who their neighbour is—because they no longer know. The people of this land have forgotten about the Lord."

The session was uneasy. They liked their little church the way it was. They liked the people they had. Most of all they liked the way they worshipped. The committee tried to show the people of the church they had nothing to fear. The minister gave them scriptural assurance that change has been the call of God to his people throughout all time. The committee told stories of other Presbyterian churches that had successfully made the transition from old to new worship styles resulting in phenomenal growth. They asked the people of the little church to read a contemporary translation of the Bible in order to add value and insight to their understanding of the Lord's purposes for his church. They challenged the little church to better discipleship.

The committee told stories of other Presbyterian churches that had successfully made the transition from old to new worship styles resulting in phenomenal growth

Hopefully, they rationalized, this would help the congregation at the little church understand that "reformed and reforming" has been the cry of the Presbyterian Church since its Reformation inception. Most of all, however, the committee longed to show the little church how wonderful the new music of the Christian church could be. They had seen for themselves how younger people in growing Presbyterian churches had positively responded to changes in worship music and worship style – music which did not include the use of an organ. "What," they asked their people, "would you be willing to give up to bring Jesus Christ back to the people of this land?"

The people of the little church listened to the committee but they didn't like what they heard. It was a John:1 kind of thing; the people saw the light, but they preferred the darkness. The committee knew that unless the little church could grasp and truly understand its biblical reason for existence (and then embrace what it has been commanded to do) then there was little reason for them to continue as a congregation in the church of Jesus Christ. The little church did not have new people coming to it because new people were never truly wanted or even invited. There wasn't any sincere thought put into the fact that younger people, who were so desperately needed in this little church, did not understand or enjoy the traditional worship practices. Especially the organ. What were they willing to give up? Nothing. The people of the little church just didn't see it as their issue. As far as they were concerned, the little church was open for business and everyone was welcome to join them in a service of traditional worship on any Sunday morning at 10:30—just like the sign on the front lawn said.

The committee of session was disbanded and the minister sent on her way. The two elders and their families left the little church because God had given them a glorious opportunity to see the possibilities available to any church. An exciting church, they had learned, does not need be an oxymoron. To be an exciting church you simply need to have excited Christians. The little church had been far from either.

Today the congregation at the sleepy little church continues to worship in a land not so far away. Their finances are faltering and they are without a minister. There appears to be no particular anxiety about death at this little church. It is accepted, and so far as God allows these things to be seen, there will not be a fairy tale ending. Their light is very dim, and they will sleep away their existence until they breathe no longer.

If the little church described in this sad tale is reminiscent of your church, then take heed, my dear Christian friend. The Lord is bringing in his harvest. Ask yourself this: Is your declining congregation being pruned in order to produce more growth? Or will it be cut and burned because you have not produced any fruit at all? (John 15:1-8)

Wake up!

Carol Ann Keys has lived this story.

Preserving the Past for the Future



The Presbyterian Church's national archives and museum harbour a rich history just waiting to be discovered. BY AMY MACLACHLAN

Archivist Kim Arnold gives the past a permanent home

To step into the national archives and records office is to step back in time. Its walls are peppered with sepia-toned photographs of mustached men in dark suits and women in feathered hats and frilly dresses. Rows upon rows of congregational records, General Assembly reports and session and presbytery minutes sit waiting to be studied, and personal diaries, mission field maps and architectural plans are neatly stored in a climate-controlled room, just begging to be read.

It is this look back, the glimpse given to the church's past (and indeed, a look at where it is today) that archivist Kim Arnold loves about the archives. One of her favourite pieces is a photo from 1893. "It's our oldest photograph," said Arnold. "It's of a laying of the cornerstone at Paris Presbyterian Church in Paris, Ontario. It's not posed, there are children and adults, and of course, they're in the dress of the period. It's so special."

Congregational records from St. Gabriel Street Church (located in Montreal and now part of Knox, Crescent, Kensington and First) dating back to 1794 are another stand-out item. The records are the oldest of their type in the archives. Missionary diaries, uniquely personal and often highly emotional, also come to mind, as do handwritten manuscripts. "They're beautiful. They show the great penmanship that you don't see anymore. You just have to stop and gaze at it."

The mandate of the archives is to collect, preserve and share the church's information base. It is also entrusted with records management, meaning it catalogues records of the General Assembly, along with its committees and task forces, records of the three theological colleges, and records generated at church offices. It also houses records of the Women's Missionary Society, the Atlantic Mission Society and young people's societies, Presbyterian periodicals, and baptism, marriage and death registers. Its collection is document-based

"It's good stewardship for the church," said Arnold, who has been with the archives for 25 years. "We are the collective memory of the denomination and all its activities both in and out of Canada."

The PCC began randomly collecting archival materials back in 1879. The collection eventually moved to Knox College, which didn't become the official archival site until 1973. It remained there until 1995, and then moved to a temporary Toronto location until a brand new facility was built at church offices in 1998. One year later, the church was awarded the Corporate Award of Achievement by the Archives Association of Ontario.

Arnold, who works alongside assistant archivist Bob Anger, encourages congregations to build their own archives by pulling out old documents, cataloguing, and preserving them. She said congregations should buy acid-free boxes and file folders (or if too expensive, at least brand new storage tools), lock up the materials, and keep them away from dampness and humidity. Striking a committee to handle the work is helpful, she said, and the archive always welcomes phone calls—and visitors—if further assistance is needed.

'We are the collective memory of the denomination and all its activities both in and out of Canada'

Donations are made to the archives when a congregation closes, a minister dies, or even when people move into an old house and find documents in the attic or basement. Arnold said that donating records after a church closes is one way to make the best of a sad situation. "People can know that these items will be looked after and appreciated by those who view or use them. Something good and positive can come out of it."

Congregations are directed by General Assembly to microfilm their records. Once a copy is made, it is stored at the archives and the originals are returned to the congregation.









1. The laying of the cornerstone at Paris Presbyterian Church, 1893 2. Dr. Margaret Strang on horseback, Peace River District, c.1930s 3. A distinguished-looking group infront of St. Andrew's, Prescott, Ont. (no date) 4. Mrs. Gushue-Taylor serving Christmas dinner at MacKay Memorial Hospital, Taiwan, 1926.

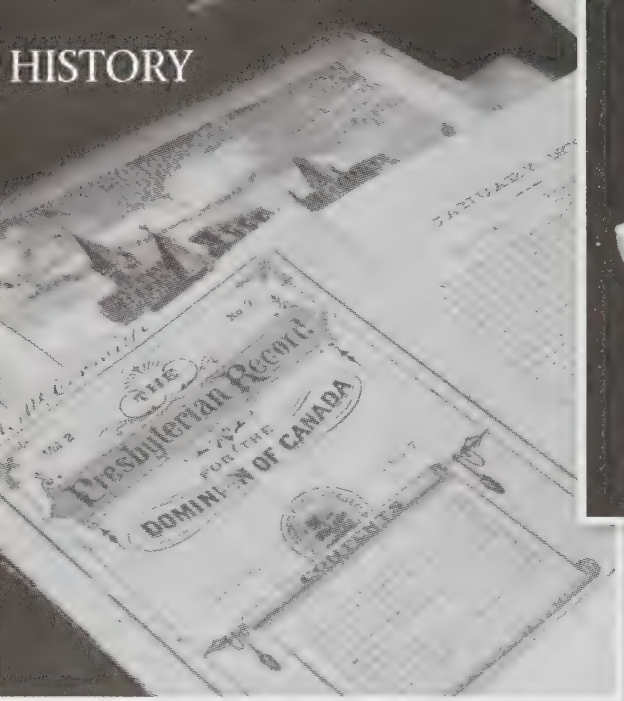
"We recognize that congregations are regionally based, so we make sure the history that was created in a locality stays there," said Arnold. "But by microfilming, it insures the documents, and it adds to the central information bank for the church at large."

International visitors often stop by to get a fuller picture of their own church. In Taiwan, for example, many records exist surrounding the PCC's involvement in the establishment of the church there; but in Canada, there are different records, and ones that are often met with great delight. "It gives them the complete story," said Arnold. "We work hand in hand."

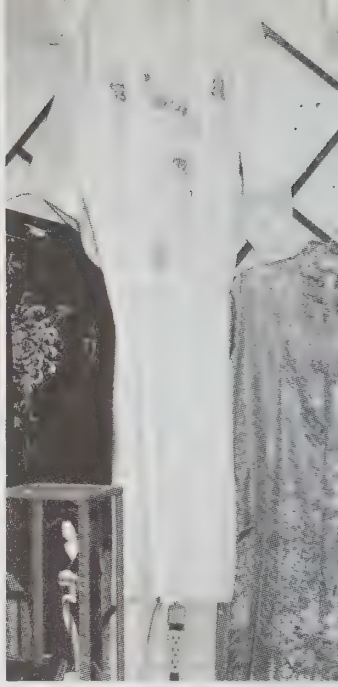
The archives office also works cooperatively with the museum, but is separate from it. While the museum exists through donations, the archives is self-supporting and is staffed through the General Assembly office. Archives staff make a report to the Committee on History, but the archives are not subject to it, as the museum is.

Arnold is happy that artifacts not suited to the archives now have a permanent home at the museum, which wasn't officially created until 2002. "We used to work so hard to find the donation a good home. If we had a communion set and we knew of a congregation that didn't have one, we'd often give it to them. We [the archives] were never meant to store artifacts. Now they're passed onto the museum, and it frees us up to do the work we're supposed to do."

Visit www.presbyterian.ca/archives/ for more information. ▸







The museum features old copies of the Record (like this one from 1877), as well as its predecessors, and extensive personal collections from former missionaries.

Curator John Johnston values our history at the museum

"My whole life has been the development of the museum and archives," said Rev. Dr. John Johnston, a retired minister and missionary, and curator of the National Presbyterian Museum and part of the Committee on History for the past 40 years. His work with the museum is a love affair; something he has harboured for all things historic throughout his career.

"Unless you know the past, you're going to make the same mistakes," said Johnston, on the importance of the church's national museum—the only one of its sort in Canada. "If you don't have roots, how can you grow without starting all over again? It's important to know the reasons why we do things in the church, and to know the strengths of the church; of how they used to be."

It took some convincing, however, for the church to share Johnston's opinion. After persuading General Assembly to create an official archives in 1973, Johnston convinced the assembly in 1996 to start a museum—as long as he could raise the funds to get it going. (It wasn't easy making the argument in 1973, but Johnston was bolstered by the church's impending centennial, and spurred on by fears surrounding church responsibility for Indian residential schools. Realizing that documents in the archives protected the church from extensive liability, the archives became a crucial resource that the church suddenly wanted to develop.)

A total of $80,000 was raised through donations for the museum, and a location was offered by St. John's, Toronto, for zero rent (the museum handles heating costs and other expenses). Generous contributions of time, supplies and labour were offered up for free or at reduced rates to make the church basement suitable for its new task. The savings enabled the team to build a $140,000 facility at a cost of $80,000. The museum was built without a cent of debt, opened in 2002, and now has $75,000 in the bank, according to Johnston. Its expenses are covered by the interest, and donations—the museum's only other means of income—keep coming in.

The museum gives three-dimensional objects—mission artifacts, pictures, plaques and wall hangings, clerical robes, books and communion ware—a permanent home. Communion tokens, of which the museum has one of the largest collections in the world with some worth $5,000, comprise the most prominent display. (Tokens are lead pieces that used to be handed to the minister by parishioners at communion as a sign of membership. They eventually morphed into communion cards, and were simply a method of tracking attendance). A large collection of tokens donated to the church by an Ontario minister was one of the main reasons for building the museum. Other ministers have since donated their own collections. The oldest token is from St. Andrew's, Quebec City, dated 1810.

Other ministers have since donated their own collections. The oldest token is from St. Andrew's, Quebec City, dated 1810

Ministers and congregations have also donated entire book collections. T. Melville Bailey, a Presbyterian historian, had his collection of Scottish church history willed to the museum. Col. John Bayne Maclean, of Maclean's magazine and the man who donated land for the Crieff Hills Retreat and Conference Centre, also has some books at the museum, along with the entire reading collection of the first theological professor in eastern Canada. They are all a part of an exhibit known as the minister's study, which houses books from the 16th to 19th centuries. John Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion, dated 1608, is one of the museum's oldest pieces.

Johnston said the libraries are a tribute to the time when the church was the only library in town. "The minister was

the educated man. He had seven years of education, so he had the books. It's interesting to know the place the church had in educating the community."

Johnston's favourite feature of the museum is its tiny chapel. With its pot-bellied stove, wall-mounted oil lamps, 150-year-old timber on its walls and floor, the chapel is truly a step back in time. When groups visit the museum, a communion service is held there, with visitors seated on old pews and scripture read at an aging altar—both of which came from Eastern Ontario.

"It's the most meaningful to me," said Johnston. "It's where people broke the bread, set the wine, stood to pray and sat to sing—and where they still do."

The museum answers to the Committee on History, and is staffed solely by volunteers.

Future plans include putting the entire collection online, "so someone in Hong Kong can see it," said Johnston. Although they have the necessary software to do such a thing, they're hoping to find someone with the appropriate computer skills to do the job.

"Some of the things are only here; they're no where else in the world," said Johnston, noting why the PCC is the only denomination in Canada with a national museum. "Canada is still young. We don't value our history the way we will 100 years from now. But if you don't value it now, things will be lost to the future. It was only in the late '50s and early '60s when the church started expanding and began to realize we have a heritage outside Scotland. Before, we were the child of Scotland. We now have a history of our own."

Visitors are welcomed at the museum, but an appointment is required. Call Rev. Dr. John Johnston at 905-528-2730. Visit the museum's website at http://presbyterian.ca/museum/. ●



"I TOOK THE ROUTE OF SOMEONE WHO HAD GIVEN UP."

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Getting on with your Life

It takes a while to admit that you are divorced.

BY VICKI HOMES

My church offered no support groups for the separated or divorced. My friends were all married. When your marriage breaks up there is an aloneness that you feel—it's as if part of your life has been torn away from you. It is unnatural and surreal. So how do you get on with life as you ride this emotional roller coaster of sadness and sorrow? You don't. You just go through it the best way you can and find help wherever you can.

I hated the uncertainty and at times I was afraid of my own future. I missed the familiar, the Christmas and Easter and birthdays with my in-laws. After 15 years there are many times when I long to be with them to celebrate those occasions. There is nothing you can do about it.

In fact there is nothing you can do about a lot of things, as you will discover. There are support issues, and court orders. There are weekend visitations and week-long vacations when your kids are not with you, their empty beds and empty rooms a constant reminder. In your mind you know it is right and good for them to be with their dad. In fact I would advocate that children maintain a strong and healthy relationship with both parents. But at times your heart feels differently.

Many who have gone through this say that they believe death would be easier to deal with. At least there is a burial and closure. With divorce it is a never-ending story that changes who you are forever and brings with it a redefinition of your family.

As I look back on this experience today, I remember worrying a lot back then. What would my boys do without a dad at home? How would I manage as a

I hated the uncertainty and at times I was afraid of my own future

single mom? How would I fit in with my married friends? What would my church family think of me?

The answers do come—and some were more surprising than others. My boys have been blessed with a dad and a step-dad who love them. They also enjoy a large extended family including five new siblings born to their dad and his new wife and stepbrothers and stepsisters associated with my husband's family.

How did I manage as a single mom? Help came in so many ways. I will never forget the help from the food bank, my cousin who brought me groceries. I will never forget the friends who included me at Christmas and New Year's when I was alone and the friends and family who babysat for free so that I could attend the support group for single parents. Through that group I was able to meet new friends. How my friendship circle has grown! Today, we still work at getting together each time I travel to Ontario. We are forever bonded by what we went through.

What did my church family think of me? For most of us, church and divorce is the greatest issue to deal with. My church family loved me no matter what. But to be honest, I still struggle, even today, to admit openly and without hesitation that I am divorced. As one of our support group participants said, "It is like you are walking around with a big 'D' on your forehead. It is like everyone in the church is looking at you."

So what can I do, how can I make a change for the better as an ordained minister of the church? In 2004, I shared my passion with our church's mission and outreach committee.

My passion was to begin a support group and program that would help others deal with the pain and the loss of divorce. To help others find peace with God, with themselves and within the church.

Vicki Homes is a minister in Prince Edward Island. This is the second of a series.

Humility in the DNA

Presbyterianism thrives on the outskirts of both urban and rural. BY PETER BUSH



Canada is said to be an urban country and the census data bear out that description. Three of every five Canadians live in cities with populations over 100,000. Not surprisingly, then, urban issues and urban values dominate Canadian public discourse.

That leaves 40 per cent of Canadians living in communities with populations under 100,000. What is striking is only 13 per cent of Canadians live in communities with populations between 10,000 and 100,000; 27 per cent of Canadians live in communities with populations under 10,000.

To borrow a phrase, there are two solitudes in Canada—a majority urban reality and a significant minority small town/rural reality—with a slim buffer between the two.

Given this stark demographic contrast, it is worth asking: "How are the congregations and membership of The Presbyterian Church in Canada situated?"

Just over 300 congregations are located in cities with populations over 100,000 (32 per cent of Presbyterian congregations). Their combined membership represents 46 per cent of Presbyterian members in Canada. (These figures include congregations in the Han-Ca presbyteries.)

Nearly 520 Presbyterian congregations (54 per cent of congregations) are found in communities with populations under 10,000. The combined membership of these congregations makes up 34 per cent of professing Presbyterians in Canada.

This highlights a fascinating fact. One in every five Presbyterians lives in a community with a population of between 10,000 and 100,000. Further investigation reveals a number of congregations in communities of this size have large (in Presbyterian terms) worshipping congregations. This is a coast-to-coast phenomenon. For example: Zion, Charlottetown; Bethel, Sydney; St. James', Truro; St. Andrew's, Fredericton; St. John's, Cornwall; First, Collingwood; St. Paul's, Ingersoll; St. Andrew's, Fergus; First, Brandon; and St. Andrew's, Duncan, are all in communities between 10,000 and 100,000, and all have 200 or more in worship each Sunday. This is but a selected list of the large Presbyterian congregations in communities of this size.

While Canadian Presbyterianism faces challenges making inroads into large urban contexts, Presbyterian congregations in small cities/large towns are finding ways to speak and be present that touch their communities. While rural and small-town congregations face the challenges of low worship attendance, Presbyterian congregations in small cities/large towns are holding their own and in some cases are growing.

Three characteristics mark congregations in communities between 10,000 and 100,000.

First, they are located in communities in the borderland between city and country—between urban and rural. These congregations are made up of people who have learned how to bridge the two Canadian solitudes (rural and urban) and create community. These congregations have learned how to be all things to all people. This is not niche marketing, this is not specialization; rather this is building a community across the barriers that divide people.

Second, in communities of this size these congregations are often the only Presbyterian game in town. Congregational members have learned to hang together even when things are not exactly the way they would want them to be. There is no other Presbyterian church to go to, so people are prepared to compromise, to be flexible. They have learned that sometimes what happens in worship will not be their cup of tea, but for the good of the body they will live with it because it is someone else's cup of tea today.

Third, these communities live in the shadow of the big, the important. As small cities or large towns they are off the radar. A humility, a self-effacement is built into the DNA of the congregations that serve these communities. Humility helps leaders, both ordained and lay, discover the church is not about them, but rather is about God. This humility speaks powerfully to a society bombarded by the voices of the self-important.

These three characteristics are counter-intuitive. They do not appear on the lists of practices church growth experts say are needed to grow congregations. But is it possible that these congregations have learned the grace needed to recognize that in Jesus Christ there is not Jew or Gentile, urban or rural, traditional or contemporary?

Rev. Peter Bush is a teaching elder at Knox, Mitchell, Ont. He recently co-authored Where 20 or 30 are Gathered: Leading Worship in the Small Church *with Christine O'Reilly. This is the second of a series.*

Moving On

A retired minister has difficulty handing in the keys to her former church.

BY MARION SCHAFFER

I've done this before, so you'd think it would be easier this time around.

But it's not.

In June 1996, I chose to take early retirement from teaching after 25 years in a classroom, after a lifetime of teaching many private students the joys of singing, playing the piano and strumming a guitar, after all the fun of being a drama teacher, a vocal specialist and a music consultant.

So I had been down this road before. Or so I thought.

But I'm getting a bit ahead of myself. You see, unlike the many who are leaving active ministry this year, that is, leaving behind the extraordinary experience of having had a church of my own, I have served as the one-and-only minister in one church, for less than four years. And I'm finding out that it's very difficult to let go. I still haven't handed in the keys to what used to be my church.

If I am having a rough time, what must it be like to be someone who is retiring after having served in not one, but many churches, all through a lifetime? Such a person might not have a home to live in, having lived in a manse for many years, and so find that leaving active ministry means leaving a home, a community, a lifestyle and many friends, as well as adjusting to a lower income level.



All I can say is that I did not expect to find tears in my eyes whenever I drove past a church, much less thought about going into a sanctuary, but that is what has been happening.

The first few weeks after I retired last year, I really found it very difficult to sit in the pew, any pew, no matter how welcoming the people in that place.

And this did not happen to me when I retired from teaching. I did have difficulty handing in the keys to my classroom, but driving past a school did not make me weep.

But here's what happens now: On a Sunday morning I wake up wanting very much to worship the Lord. Then I go through all the usual rituals of any other Sunday morning, all the while looking forward to a time apart in prayer, anticipating hearing uplifting music, expecting to enjoy worship with like-minded believers, maybe meeting new people who will welcome me into the fold, and, certainly not expecting to feel, well I might as well tell the truth … absolutely miserable … and feeling that way every time, every Sunday, everywhere I go. Why? I knew I was missing my congregation; of course I expected that to happen. I will always cherish the experiences that I shared with those loving, gracious and faithful people. But there was something more going on.

I truly thought the time was right to leave. So why am I so miserable?

Why have I been feeling so miserable? It's not as though I had been booted out of my church; no one asked me to go. I truly thought the time was right to leave. It was my bright idea to leave at this time, in fact.

I have had to learn the meaning of my pain. By taking the time to think this through, to go inside my pain, I have discovered I feel that I have abandoned God.

Yes, I feel I have abandoned God. It makes sense when you recall the vows I made at my ordination and the words I spoke at my induction, the promises which I made to God and to my congregation.

So how do I overcome this dark feeling?

I need to wait on the Lord and seek His desires for my life. And hand in the keys to His house.

Marion Schaffer may be a retired minister but she continues to find different ways to act on her calling.



I Just Want to Belong

In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty and in all things charity. BY CALVIN BROWN

A sense of belonging is at the core of Christian experience. It includes not only the grace-filled belonging in the personal fellowship within the Godhead, as John speaks of in Chapter One of his first letter, but also belonging to the fellowship of believers. In the Apostles' Creed, which outlines the essentials of the faith, we declare our belief in the Holy Catholic church and in the communion of saints. These confessions affirm our basic human need to belong. Even in the creation story we are reminded that in the Creator's perspective, even though He was pleased with all He had made, yet it was not good for the man to be alone and so Eve was created from Adam's side to be a companion and helpmate.

The church therefore must always be aware that it needs to be a place of welcome and a place of belonging. It is very important that we be as inclusive as we can but the error we often make is that we think that being inclusive means that we accept anyone on their terms and affirm all that they value. In reality, we all would put limitations on that but the rhetoric remains that we need to be all-inclusive and to show unconditional love to all who would come to the church. This half-truth of being inclusive turns into a whole lie that corrupts community.

Why should there be any limitation? It is because while we earnestly are to love them unconditionally, love does not mean we tolerate sin.

Who is to say what sin is? The answer is that we are to be directed solely by the word of God through prayerful study of the scriptures. The Bible outlaws much sexual behaviour that our society now accepts as normal. We should not simply follow along with societal norms as one after another of these biblical standards are eroded. The church cannot be a place of belonging if it is not first a place of security and truth. Relationships are built on integrity. We must say what we mean and mean what we say. If we say something is wrong then we must have the courage to stand against it whether the sin is found in our close friend or in a stranger or even in ourselves. As Proverbs 27 reminds us: "Open rebuke is better than secret love and faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful."

Without discipleship (or discipline) we are not really the fellowship we are called to be. Unconditional love is the mark of the church and inclusiveness must find its way within that parameter. Then and only then will we be the covenanted community that God calls us to be—only then will there be a place that we can really belong to. A serious part of love is to be held accountable, to be all that we can be, and at times that means we will be under discipline. If someone is close enough to correct you and not threaten the friendship then you know you belong.

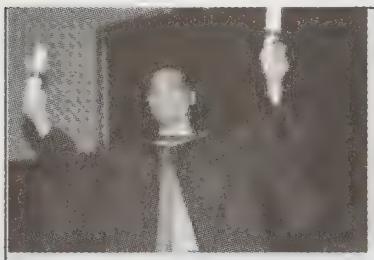
Strangers must keep a veneer of niceness but true friends appreciate it when even their faults are pointed out in a loving, supportive way. This is so because friends have proven they are for us and their comments are intended to help us work through a source of dysfunction in the relationship. This is often hard work but it is essential for belonging to one another and for a healthy community of faith to be built.

To be community, we must have identity. Identity is essential to belonging since we will not know what we belong to if there are no boundaries. Boundaries do not have to be narrow on every side, but ▶

the community must decide what the boundaries are. Augustine put it this way: "In essentials unity (you need to define what the essential boundaries are), in non-essentials liberty and in all things charity."

It is my view that our failure as a church to reach out and gently discipline one another in a way that reflects unconditional love has put us in the place of being untrusting and suspicious of others. We are so frightened we don't even want to discuss it because we don't really believe the many others in the church are for us. We can have all the programs we like to build up positive relationships between presbyteries and congregations and people within congregations, but until we do as God has asked in this matter of discipline we will always suspect that we are the outsiders who don't belong.

Calvin Brown is the editor of The Renewal Fellowship *within The Presbyterian Church in Canada.*



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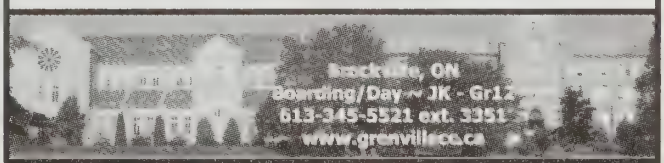
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Solid Leadership, Strong Support

The largest presbytery needs extra effort to hold everything together. BY AMY MACLACHLAN

"We often get the feeling that the presbytery is dysfunctional, until we talk with colleagues in other presbyteries," admits Rev. Bob Geddes, minister at South Gate, Hamilton and member of the Presbytery of Hamilton, the largest presbytery in the country by number of charges with 32 (tied with Montreal and Barrie). "Within this era of change, with efforts to grow, and worship wars, we spend a lot of time in reaction mode, and this is very draining on members of presbytery, clergy and elders. In recent years there have been moments when we have more commissions going on than the General Assembly. However, presbytery meetings are quite collegial, and there are many positive things going on within the presbytery."

The presbytery has shown interest in looking to the future and responding to change by hosting the annual REAP evangelism conference. Now in its third and final year, a team of ministers and elders have helped create, organize and present this event that has grown beyond the presbytery's bounds. This year's conference is slated for May 11 and 12 and will focus on "growing deeper" by examining the idea that evangelism and discipleship are inseparable. The past two conferences have reached more than 300 participants from 50 congregations and four denominations. "It has been a time of challenge as well as a time of vibrant worship, stretching the participants to become people of mission," said Rev. Fred Stewart, minister at the St. Paul's, Carluke and Knox, Binbrook charge, and a speaker at this year's event. The conference promises to bring participants "Relevant, Effective, Accessible and Practical information on outreach and evangelism in today's world."

Carluke and Binbrook have taken their minister's lead when it comes to worship. Binbrook has been worshiping in a fully contemporary style for more than a year, while Carluke is following a more blended approach with various kinds of music and traditions. "They both share the goal of reaching beyond their own walls and their own preferences to reach communities that need Christ and His church," said Stewart.

Both congregations also have a particular focus on youth. They employ three youth workers leading as many as 50 children, youth and young adults. Both congregations turn the last Sunday of the month over to the youth, asking them to lead worship and engage the whole congregation in what is relevant to them. A number of youth will even preach the sermons on youth Sundays this year.

Cafe Church for young adults seeks to be an open, encouraging time where participants talk, debate, laugh and share topics of interest

This two-point charge isn't the only one in the presbytery committed to youth.

St. David's, Hamilton, offers a program that's entering its 20th season. Known as Inner City Outreach Ministries, it has seen a total of 1,500 children and youth enrolled in its programming over the years, averaging about 250 participants each year. A number of recreational activities are held three nights a week and attracts people from the ages of six to 24. Community dinners are also held throughout the year. Funds raised from the program ensure that more than 100 children are able to go to summer camp.

Chedoke, Hamilton, runs a weeknight program for children called Kids ROC. It has been running for just over three years and currently enrolls about 90 from kindergarten age to grade 8, plus a group of teens who are part of a leader in training program. With dinner included, the curriculum is self-designed with a focus on using "rap" rhyming to help participants learn biblical themes.

MacNab St., Hamilton, runs Café Church for young adults who are interested in exploring faith and life issues at a challenging and mature level and developing friendships with young adults within this community. Meeting twice monthly, the group discusses various issues over a steaming cup of coffee, rich hot chocolate and sweet baked goods. Previous discussions have included authorship of the Torah, spiritual personality type and the Book of Revelation. Café Church seeks to be an open, encouraging time where participants talk, debate, laugh and share topics of interest. Last year, the







Members of the presbytery's praise band The Witnesses at Canada Youth 06. Top: Central, Hamilton

group planned an Ash Wednesday service and will be leading one again this year.

Knox, Dundas, which celebrated its 175th anniversary last year, also focuses on youth. A youth chorus, created a few years ago by director of music David Buckley and his family, sings at worship each week. Knox also sets aside about five services a year when all the members of the family can worship together. The Sunday school uses the workshop rotation model, and the church recently hired a student from Redeemer University College to lead a Friday night youth group. "We are gradually acquiring a reputation as a congregation welcoming of children and this has been identified by some of those who have recently joined our congregation as the reason they decided to become part of our church family," said Rev. Don Donaghey.

The presbytery reaches youth in another way thanks to Carol Wood, a chaplain at McMaster University in Hamilton. The chaplaincy is a ministry of the presbytery, with Wood being a Christian presence among the young adults attending the school.

Youth in partnership

Other congregations offer joint youth groups, like the one organized by South Gate, Hamilton, and Chalmers, Hamilton. Discussions to share the responsibility began about eight years ago, thinking that "a coordinated effort would establish a critical mass for lively programming and attraction for the youth of each congregation," according to Rev. Bob Geddes, minister at South Gate and also an organizer of worship events at Canada Youth 2006.

The youth named themselves the C.A.U.T.I.O.N.S. Youth Group, or Christians All United Together In One Noble Saviour. Each church contributes to funding part-time leadership and expenses. Weekly meetings alternate between the two churches, with activities ranging from Bible study and discussion, to games and movies, to seasonal celebrations and field trips. The group has also developed a talent for drama, music and worship leadership which is put to use at various services throughout the year.

Geddes said several factors have contributed to the program's success. Solid leadership and strong support from both congregations, along with a balance of members from each have not only ensured a lively, dedicated youth group, but have also led to active participation and leadership by the youth within the wider church structure. Last summer, members of the group undertook leadership roles at two synod camps and at the Summer Experience program of the Synod of Southwestern Ontario (a traveling VBS and leader training program), and had seven registrants at Canada ▶

Youth 2006.

Creating and nurturing such relationships isn't always easy in a large presbytery.

"It has its challenges," said Rev. Cathy Stewart-Kroeker of St. Cuthbert's, Hamilton. "Like figuring out how to work in effective and sensitive ways in such a big group."

"Building relationships between the congregations is very important," said Geddes, who has been South Gate's minister for about 16 years. "We can learn and support one another as most congregations have a special focus or program that seems to be effective, and we can help one another identify those corporate gifts."

The challenge of intimate interaction in such a large presbytery is particularly noticeable to Stewart-Kroeker, who before her 16 years at St. Cuthbert's was a part of the Presbytery of Newfoundland—one of the church's smallest. She thinks such a large body would benefit from commissioning people for leadership responsibilities—particularly during presbytery meetings.

"Otherwise, it's just a bunch of committees. It's not like a session of a church, which gives leadership. We need leadership. There are a lot of decisions to be made, and a lot of discernment needed. It doesn't just happen."

Geddes pointed out that the presbytery's moderator, Rev. Dr. Ian McPhee, is guiding the presbytery through a process of making meetings work more effectively and efficiently, "while guiding both the presbytery and congregations in a direction which moves us from a maintenance mode to a mission mode."

Despite some challenges, "there are also good things happening in various congregations with mission work," said Stewart-Kroeker. "Even without a formal leadership structure, there are people taking it on individually."

Hallelujah and helping others

At Brant Hills, Burlington, the thousands of cars using Brant Street each day are treated to creative messages displayed outside the church. "It can best be described as vibrant, enthusiastic and growing," said Rev. Bob Dawson of his north-west Burlington congregation, where the community is becoming younger and more ethnically diverse. The services are blended-contemporary, with Praise Expression, a 10-member praise team, alternating with the 15-member choir, and Power Point is used to project hymns, scripture readings and pictures onto a screen throughout the service.

An active youth group has raised several thousand dollars for annual mission projects, including $1,500 towards new water wells in Malawi in 2005. Other members of the congregation have made two trips to Biloxi, Mississippi, to assist victims of Hurricane Katrina.

No one at Knox, Waterdown, knew that a community breakfast that began in 1993 as a fundraiser for a church addition and hosted by the church's men, would eventually serve 65,000 breakfasts by 2007. About 140 people file in every Saturday morning for a home-cooked meal, with a Christmas morning breakfast being particularly popular. Guests give donations, with all proceeds going to ministries in the Waterdown community.

Last November, Knox began what Rev. George Robertson hopes will become a regular part of its worship and ministry life. Hillary Hulzinga, Knox' praise team leader, and lead vocalist for The Witnesses (a youth praise band that led worship each day at Canada Youth 2006) coordinated the first youth worship gathering at Knox. More than 200 young people and adults were led in worship by the youthful group.

Central, Hamilton, (est. 1841), has had four of its past ministers elected as Moderator of the General Assembly beginning in 1909. It is well known for its music ministry, receiving an invitation in 2001 to sing at St. Paul's Cathedral in London, and to act as Choir in Residence at Christ Church Cathedral in Oxford. The choir is eagerly awaiting a return to London in 2008.

But music isn't the only thing of note at Central. The congregation hosts the Hamilton Out of the Cold program on Wednesday and Thursday nights from November to March. Guests not only receive a hot meal, but a place to sleep during the frigid winter nights. Central also supports CFGB, PWS&D, has a growing Sunday school, runs a health ministries program, holds Spring luncheons, bazaars and rummage sales, and continues a 70-year association with the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. The congregation also recently raised more than $2 million to finance a restoration of the historical Central building. Work will be completed in the coming year.

This is part one of the Presbytery of Hamilton's profile. Part two will appear next month.

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BY PHIL CALLAWAY



Dear Phil,
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— Sleepless in Saskatchewan

Dear Sleepless,

Congratulations! You are about to be welcomed into the Guys Who Can't Believe We're Dads Club. When I was your age fatherhood was the farthest thing from my mind. But four years later my wonderful wife stood before me in some rather expensive lingerie and said, "Honey, let's have kids—tons of them." And it sounded like a good idea at the time. Eight months later I found myself in prenatal class—learning how to breathe, watching R-rated films and holding a tennis ball. "Rub her back with this in the delivery room," said the instructor. "It will provide peace and serenity, a sense of oneness with each other and the universe."

May 31, 1986 was a Saturday. My friends played softball that day. I paced a hospital hallway with my wife. Or at least I think it was my wife. But whereas Ramona had always been rather sweet and soft-spoken, this woman was more like Attila the Hun in a hospital gown.

"RUB MY BACK!" she commanded.I pulled out the ball.

"DON'T TOUCH ME!" she hollered.

This continued for what seemed like 14 days—until I found myself face-to-face with the first miracle I'd ever witnessed: my firstborn son. Sure he was a little wrinkly, but who could blame him? I held him close. I touched his tiny fingers and counted his toes—all 10 of them. I looked into his eyes. They were blue like mine. "Stephen," said my wife with the widest smile I'd ever seen.

And then the most amazing thing happened. A revival, I suppose.

As I looked into those blue eyes, it was as if I heard these words: "Callaway, for the first 25 years of your life you've been a hypocrite. You've been close to the church but far from God. You are holding in your arms the one person you'll never be able to hide it from. If you think this little guy won't see it, you're naive. If you think this little guy won't learn from what he sees, think again."

People ask me when I became a Christian. I say May 31, 1986. You see, that night, for the first time in my life, I bowed my head and said, "Dear God, I'm sorry. Make me real. I want my precious little boy to hunger and thirst after righteousness. I want him to love Jesus with everything he's got. If he won't learn to from me, he has two strikes against him already."

And I meant every word.

It's been slow going sometimes, but I believe God heard that prayer. Five years later this same little boy looked up at me one night and said, "Daddy, I wanna be like you," and tears came to my eyes.

I don't have all the child-rearing answers for you, Sleepless. But I do know this: If you want your child to love God, you love Him first. If you want your son to obey, be obedient to the still small voice of God. And if you want your life to be changed forever, have children. Tons of them.

Phil Callaway is a speaker and bestselling author of books like It's Always Darkest Before the Fridge Door Opens *(Bethany House). Visit him at www.laughagain.org*



The Lesson of the Yellow-head

Grace and gratitude belong together like heaven and earth. BY DAVID WEBBER

"They're here, and they sure are hungry!" Linda said, as I arrived home for supper.

"Who's they?" I said suspiciously, casting a protective eye towards the supper table.

"The yellow-heads," Linda replied.

"I don't like 'em nor the horse they rode in on," I whispered. "Did we invite them?" I was racking my aging memory, desperately trying to remember who the heck the Yellowheads were and why they had turned up at our place precisely at suppertime.

"No you inhospitable oaf, the yellow-headed blackbirds. They showed up right on schedule, just like they have for years. They moved in on our two bird feeders this morning and cleaned them out in minutes."

"Oh, those guys," I said, greatly relieved. "That's cool. I guess that means spring is here for sure."

We sat down for supper. After the table was cleared, Linda filled both bird feeders for the morning onslaught. Shortly after dawn the next morning, I heard the unmistakeable rusty-hinge voices of yellow-headed blackbirds. When I eventually barefooted it into the kitchen to get our morning coffee, I paused before the window to watch two of them gorging themselves. They looked like a couple of feathered swine at a seed trough.

After breakfast and pictures, I sat in an ancient pressed-back rocker in the living room watching the 'Yellowheads' and reflecting on the cycles of nature. We live on the edge of Lac la Hache, at the northern marshy end. We share it with a plethora of fur, fish and fowl that make their living here. A series of three large picture windows span the side of our house on the lakeside. Our lives largely consist of gazing out these windows, watching our wild neighbours and the cycles of nature. The seasons come, the seasons go, and as the seasons cycle so does the wildlife. In the last week of March, just as the ice loosens its steely grip on the lakeshore, the yellow-heads always show up. Over the years, we've slowly learned you can bank on nature's cycles.

In the last week of March, the yellow-heads always show up. We've learned you can bank on nature's cycles

Lately I have been learning that not only can you bank on nature's cycles

but you can bank on the Spirit's cycles too. Spiritually, certain things follow certain things. Like lately, I've been learning about joy.

I don't know about you, but it has always given me the shivering two-step when I read in my Bible the command to, "Rejoice always."(1Thess. 5:16) On one hand it sounds like, "Do what ever you have to, to make yourself feel joyful," which seems to me to be more than two steps beyond self-serving. On the other hand, it sounds like, "Pull yourself up by the bootstraps fella and generate some joy," which when I am feeling depressed is two steps beyond impossible. And yet, over and over again in the Bible, especially in my two favourite places, Paul's Epistles and the Psalms, I read, 'rejoice always.' In one place, Paul has the audacity to follow his seeming command to "rejoice always" with the statement, "this is God's will for you." Ya, right! If I dwell on it too much, it kind of leaves me sitting in a corner, examining my own nasal contents. The song, "Don't Worry, Be Happy" has a similar effect on me.

This can't be what Paul nor the Psalms has in mind. If I look closely at one of the places where Paul is commanding rejoicing always, lo and behold it is embedded in a spiritual cycle. The cycle includes, "pray continuously and give thanks in all things." (1 Thess. 5:17, 18). This spiritual cycle is perhaps best described as the cycle of grace and gratitude. Because God is a God of grace, my faith in Him moves me to always pray. This just naturally seems to cycle to giving thanks. John Calvin put it "The reason why Paul enjoins, 'Pray without ceasing; in every thing give thanks,' is, because he would have us with the utmost assiduity, at all times, in every place, in all things, and under all circumstances, direct our prayers to God, to expect all the things which we desire from him, and when obtained ascribe them to him; thus furnishing perpetual grounds for prayer and praise."

Hmmm—a perpetual cycle of prayer and thanksgiving, of grace and gratitude. "Grace and gratitude belong together like heaven and earth … grace calls forth gratitude like voice does an echo … gratitude follows grace like thunder follows lightning." I think Karl Barth said that. "Grace brings on gratitude like March does yellow-headed blackbirds." I said that. But how does joy fit in?

Ben Patterson suggests in his book *Deepening Your Conversation with God* that joy is the subjective experience of gratitude and grace! I like that. It suggests that joy is part of the grace and gratitude cycle. It suggests that joy spiritually follows God's grace, my continuous prayers and expressing thanks in all things. It suggests that I don't have to manufacture joy but that it shows up as the fruit of the Spirit as I participate in God's grace and gratitude sequence of things. It suggests Joy is embedded as part of a wondrous spiritual cycle. When I take this hypothesis to the laboratory of my faith, it is powerfully proven true, even in the midst of my own human suffering. And it dawns on me what another human sufferer means when he writes, "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

I don't know about you, but it has always given me the shivering two-step when I read in my Bible the command to,"Rejoice always." On one hand it sounds like, "Do what ever you have to, to make yourself feel joyful," which seems to me to be more than two steps beyond self-serving

Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the Record. He is minister of the Cariboo, B.C. house church ministry. His most recent book is Like a Winter's Aspen: Embracing the Creator's Fire.

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Called to Wonder

Many of you will have a break from school in March. Perhaps you and your family are going on a trip or just spending time at home. Here are some fun Bible trivia games you can play in the car or at home – all you need is a Bible and someone to play with!

Scoring: Give yourself 100 points if you can answer it without any clues, 50 points if you can answer it with just one clue, and 25 points if you answer it after the last clue.

1. The last book of the Old Testament and the first book of the New Testament begin with the same letter. What are they?
Clue #1: They are boy's names
Clue #2: They both have seven letters

2. What is the title given to the followers of Jesus who founded the early church?
Clue #1: The disciples and Paul became these
Clue #2: They are commissioned in Matthew 28:16-20

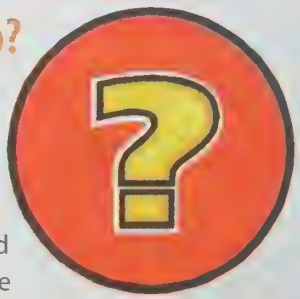
3. What was the name of Jacob's wife?
Clue #1: She had a sister named Leah
Clue #2: She was the mother of Joseph and Benjamin

4. What are the rules that God gave to Moses on Mount Sinai called?
Clue #1: There are 10 of them
Clue #2: They were written on a stone tablet

5. What is another name for God?
Clue #1: The third person of the Trinity
Clue #2: Came to the disciples at Pentecost

Bonus Question (this is worth 50 extra points!)
Take the first letter of every correct answer. What does it spell?

How well did you do?



If you scored 500 or more, you are a Bible Expert!

If you scored less than 500, you did very well but you should read the Bible more and become more familiar with all of its amazing people and stories!

To report a vacancy for the next issue of the Record please contact Deborah Leader
Tel: 1-800-619-7301 x308 Fax: 416-441-2823 E-mail: dleader@presbyterian.ca

All notices of pulpit vacancies will be charged to the congregation: $40 minimum for one-time insertion or $25 per insertion for four or more. This charge applies to all congregations. Contact the Record office regarding items for this column.

Ministry Opportunities and Interim Moderators

Synod of the Atlantic Provinces

Bass River, N.B., Bass River Pastoral Charge; Rev. Kent Burdett, 101 Dutch Point Rd., Hampton, NB E5N 5Z2; 506-832-4985; kburdett@nbnet.nb.ca.

Halifax, N.S.; Knox Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator The Rev. D. Laurence Mawhinney, PO Box 1972, Lunenburg, NS B0J 2C0; 902-634-4410 (office); 902-634-9212 (home); dlmawhinney@eastlink.ca.

Sackville, N.B., St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Dr. Charles H. H. Scobie, 227 Main St., Sackville, NB E4L 3A7; 506-536-0247; cscobie@eastlink.ca.

St. John's, Nfld.; St. David's; Interim Moderator David Sutherland, 98 Elizabeth Ave., St. John's, NL A1B 1R8; dsutherland@nf.sympatico.ca.

Sunny Corner Pastoral Charge, N.B., St. Stephen's, Sunny Corner, St. Paul's, Warwick; Rev. H. Martyn Van Essen, 7 Hierlihy Rd., Tabusintac, NB E9H 1Y5; 506-779-1812; hmvanessen@hotmail.com.

Synod of Quebec and Eastern Ontario

Brockville, Ont., First Presbyterian Church; Rev. Geoff Howard, Interim Moderator, 38 Elizabeth Dr., PO Box 440, Iroquois, ON K0E 1K0; 613-652-6215; gl.howard@sympatico.ca.

Inverness, Que., St. Andrew's co-operative with the United Church; Rev. J. B. Forsyth, 585 rue Principale sud, Waterville, QC J0B 3H0; 819-837-1475.

Kenyon, Dunvegan and St. Columba, Kirk Hill pastoral charge, Ont.; Rev. Bob Martin, Interim Moderator, PO Box 41, Vankleek Hill, Ont. K0B 1R0; 613-678-2826; ruthandrobertmartin@sympatico.ca.

Montreal, Que., Taiwanese Robert Campbell Memorial; Rev. Dr. Bill Klempa, 155 Lac Louisa Rd. N., Wentworth, QC J8H 3W8; 450-533-5321; wklemp@po-box.mcgill.ca.

Pincourt, Que., Ile Perrot; Mark Farrell, Convener, Search Committee, 242 Fifth Ave., Pincourt, QC J7V 5L3; 514-453-4796; markim@ca.inter.net.

Richmond, Ont., St. Andrew's; a call to dynamic, innovative, caring, family-focused ministry; Rev. Dr. Tom Gemmell, 38 Mary Hill Cres., Richmond, ON K0A 2Z0; 613-838-5949; tomgemmell@sympatico.ca.

Vankleek Hill, Ont., Knox, Hawkesbury, Ont., St. Paul's; Rev. Ian MacMillan, RR 2, Cornwall, ON K6H 5R6; 613-931-2545; a3100@glen-net.ca.

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If you feel that God is calling You as our next minister to lead us in these areas, please contact our Interim-Moderator:

Rev. Jonathan Kwon
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VACANCIES

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Fenelon Falls, St. Andrew's and Glenarm, Ont., Knox; Interim Moderator Rev. J. Desmond Howard, 290 Dutch Line Rd., Kinmount, ON K0M 2A0; 705-488-2187; desmondhoward@sympatico.ca.

Harriston, Ont., Knox-Calvin; Rev. Kees Vandermey, 55 Church St., PO Box 638, Elora, ON N0B 1S0; 519-846-2420; vanknox@sentex.net.

Maple, Ont., St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Gordon Timbers, 73 Fred Varley Dr., Markham, ON L3R 1S6; 905-475-6233; gtimbers@sympatico.ca.

Mississauga, Ont., Dixie Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Reid Chudley, PO Box 16, Hillsburgh, ON N0B 1Z0; 519-855-6216; r.chudley@bellnet.ca.

Mississauga, Ont., St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Peter Barrow, 24 Stavebank Rd. N., Mississauga, ON L5G 2T5; 905-278-8907; standrew-spc@bellnet.ca.

Oshawa, Ont., Knox; Rev. Ralph Fluit, 70 Old Kingston Rd., Scarborough, ON M1E 3J5; 416-283-3703; melville_church@bellnet.ca.

Penetanguishene, Ont., First; Rev. Peter Ruddell, Box A-180, RR 1, Coldwater, ON L0K 1E0; 705-686-3125; panddruddell@rogers.com.

Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., Westminster Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Daniel Reeves, 1114 Auger Ave., Sudbury, ON P3A 4B2; 705-566-0652; calvinpc@hotmail.com.

Thornhill, Ont., Thornhill Presbyterian; Rev. Barry Van Dusen, PO Box 264, Nobleton, ON L0G 1N0; 905-859-0843; barry.peggy.vandusen@sympatico.ca.

Toronto, Guildwood Community; Rev. J. P. Ian Morrison, 17 Earswick Dr., Scarborough, ON M1E 1C7; 416-265-0135; Ian.morrison@sympatico.ca.

Toronto, Knox Agincourt; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Ian Clark, c/o Knox Agincourt Presbyterian Church, 4156 Sheppard Ave. E., Toronto, ON M1S 1T3; knoxpres@on.aibn.com.

Toronto, St. Andrew's; Rev. Bill Middleton, 105 Wilson Ave., Toronto, ON M5M 2Z9; 416-485-4000; bmiddleton@armourheights.org.

Waterloo, Ont., Waterloo North; Rev. Calvin Brown; 5 Linda Dr., Cambridge, ON N3C 3W5; 519-651-2232; cbbrown@rogers.com

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West Toronto Presbytery, York Memorial; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Lance Odland, 11 Cross St., Toronto, ON M9N 2B8; 416-241-9533; lance@westonpresbyterianchurch.com.

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Chesley, Geneva Church; Rev. Dr. Alex McCombie, RR 3, Chesley, ON N0G 1L0; Phone: 519-363-5392; Fax: 519-363-0975

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Goderich, Knox Presbyterian Church; Rev. Peter Bush, PO Box 235, Mitchell, ON N0K 1N0; knoxmit@quadro.net.

Hamilton, MacNab St.; Rev. George Robertson, 80 Mill St. N., PO Box 221, Waterdown, ON L0R 2H0; 905-689-8115; rev.george@bellnet.ca.

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Molesworth, St. Andrew's; Part-time position; John Zondag, 220 Livingstone Ave. N., Listowel, ON N4W 1P9; 519-291-4690; jzondag@bellnet.ca.

North Pelham and Rockway, Ont.; Interim Moderator Rev. Graham Kennedy, 53 Church St., St. Catharines, ON L2R 3C3; 905-641-8868; gkennedy@niagara.com.

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Winnipeg, St. James; Rev. Amy Campbell, 299 Olive St., Winnipeg, MB R3J 2X5; 204-831-5561; amethyst@mts.net.

Winnipeg, Westwood; Rev. Matthew Brough, Knox, 341 Eveline St., Selkirk, MB R1A 1M9; mcbroug@shaw.ca or Rev. Kevin Macdonald, St. John's, 251 Bannerman Ave., Winnipeg, MB R2W 0T8; mactamal@yahoo.co.uk.

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Regina, Norman Kennedy; Rev. Eric Muirhead, 2170 Albert St., Regina, SK S4P 2T9; revfirstpres@sasktel.net.

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Victoria, Chinese (bi-lingual, English/Cantonese); Rev. H. McNabb, 760 Latoria Rd., Victoria, BC V9C 3A4; hamcnabb@shaw.ca

West Vancouver, West Vancouver Presbyterian Church; The Rev. R. C. (Bob) Garvin, 12225 Senda Crt., Mission, BC V4S 1B8; garvins@shaw.ca.

OBITUARIES



BETTS, MARGARET RUTH, passed away on December 27, 2006 at the age of 95. A long time faithful member and organist at Blair Presbyterian Church, Garden of Eden, New Glasgow, N.S. Began to play in the church at the age of 14. An active community worker. Survived by her daughter Marjorie (Donald) Robertson, Thorburn, N.S.; daughter-in-law Eleanor Betts, Sydney, N.S.; six grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren.

FRASER, DR. GEORGE ALEXANDER, an elder of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Windsor, Ont. for over 50 years died on December 26, 2006 in his 95th year. Dr. Fraser received his medical degree in Edinburgh in 1939 and joined the Royal Army Medical Corps. He spent six years in the British army serving as a medical officer on troop ships in almost every theatre of war. He participated in the treatment of the rescued prisoners-of-war from Japanese camps as these men were liberated and taken home by ship.

After the war, Dr. Fraser decided to dedicate his career to the health of children. He served pediatric residences at the Children's Hospital in Vancouver, B.C. and The Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, Ont. He opened his pediatric practice in Windsor in 1951 and became Chief of Pediatrics at The Salvation Army Grace Hospital.

Dr. Fraser was a gentleman in every sense of the word.

GELLATLY, REV. DR. M. ROY, passed away December 26, 2006 in Lethbridge, Alta. at the age of 71 years. Beloved husband of Beverly; loving father of Ian, Heather, Kevin and the late Duncan; grandfather of Kyle, Kaitlyn, Alysha, Talia and Fiona.

Roy faithfully ministered in The Presbyterian Church in Canada from 1961 to 1998, beginning his ministry in Nigeria, and then pastoring both rural and urban congregations in Ontario. He concluded his ministry as Administrative Coordinator of the Synod of Alberta.

Throughout his career he served on many ecumenical and national church committees. He was actively involved in social justice, mission and outreach committees. He will be greatly missed.

MCGILLIVRAY, MARION (LAMONT), September 17, 2006. Mrs. Clarence McGillivray was a faithful teacher, W.M.S. life member, organist and choir master at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Glammis, Ont., 1946-1973. In 1973, the McGillivrays joined Knox Presbyterian Church, Burgoyne, Ont. Marion was organist, junior choir director and in 1992 became Burgoyne's first woman elder. She was Session Clerk from 2000 to 2003. Marion and Clarence moved in 2004 and joined Knox Presbyterian Church, Tara, Ont. Surviving are husband Clarence, three sons, two daughters, four grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

YOUNG, RALPH, aged 81 in August 2006. Charter member of Kirk-on-the-Hill Presbyterian Church, Fonthill, Ont. A dedicated faithful elder and quiet handyman.


The Honourable Barbara A. Hagerman, Prince Edward Island's Lieutenant Governor with Moderator, Wilma Welsh.

Continue to Marvel

Some great stories and some remembrances from Prince Edward Island. BY WILMA WELSH

What great stories I am hearing as I visit the Church. In January while in Prince Edward Island I visited two congregations, Tyne Valley and Victoria West. Despite their small numbers they share an enthusiasm and an excitement for mission. As we travelled through the countryside it was disappointing to see how many church buildings are no longer in use. However, at the presbytery meeting, we learned of one congregation that has gone from a half-time ministry to a three-quarters time ministry and now with the assistance of Presbyterians Sharing, through Canada Ministries, they proceeded with a call for a full time minister. It is good to be able to celebrate such great stories. I am not facing all doom and gloom but a new excitement for ministry within our Church.

I also had the privilege of meeting with the Honourable Barbara A. Hagerman, the Lieutenant Governor of Prince Edward Island. Her Honour is a Presbyterian and until the time of her appointment last July, was the organist and choir leader at Summerside. Presbyterians across this great country are serving in many positions of responsibility.

While in P.E.I., I visited with friends of many years ago. We talked a lot about "remember when" and reflected on the importance of youth work, and in particular PYPS in our faith journey. These organizations influenced our lives and we believe they kept us in the church. We viewed old slides and movies and talked a great deal about our younger days. We had difficulty putting names to faces. We noted the number who went on to full time service in the church. We are almost all now retired but share a joy in the opportunities that the church gave to us and the privilege we had to serve within the Presbyterian Church. Some of us have not done well at retirement but wish to continue to serve where there is a need.

By the time this message is published I will have had the opportunity to visit all three of our theological colleges. Knox College has welcomed 12 new students during this winter semester. I visited informally with the students at Knox after the worship service. We talked about mission; what is mission? Last November I was met with the students at Vancouver School of Theology at a service at St. Andrew's Hall.

I am attempting to attend as many meetings as possible. I can recall at my installation as Moderator hearing the words that I am an ex officio member of all boards and committees of the church. It is impossible to attend all but I have tried to attend the committees that have invited me.

I continue to marvel at the great stories I am hearing within our Church. Let us give thanks to God and continue to pray for the ministries of our denomination.

Blessings,

Wilma Welsh, Moderator, 132nd General Assembly

Moderator's Itinerary

March

4	St. Andrew's, Guelph, Ont.
5, 6	Life and Mission Agency, Crieff Hills, Ont.
18	St. Mark's, Toronto, Ont.
25	Central and Knox, Cambridge, Ont.
25-27	Assembly Council, Crieff Hills, Ont.


Robert James Dorgan


Virginia McGlenning

"Who, then, is the faithful and prudent servant, whom the master has put in charge of his household to distribute to them their food at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master on his arrival finds doing so."
Matthew 24

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ABEL PANDY, TAKEN AT AN EVANGEL HALL SUPPER, TORONTO.


Theo Oshanek


Anita Copegeo


John Widdowson

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PRESBYTERIAN Record

April 2007

He Is Emergent!



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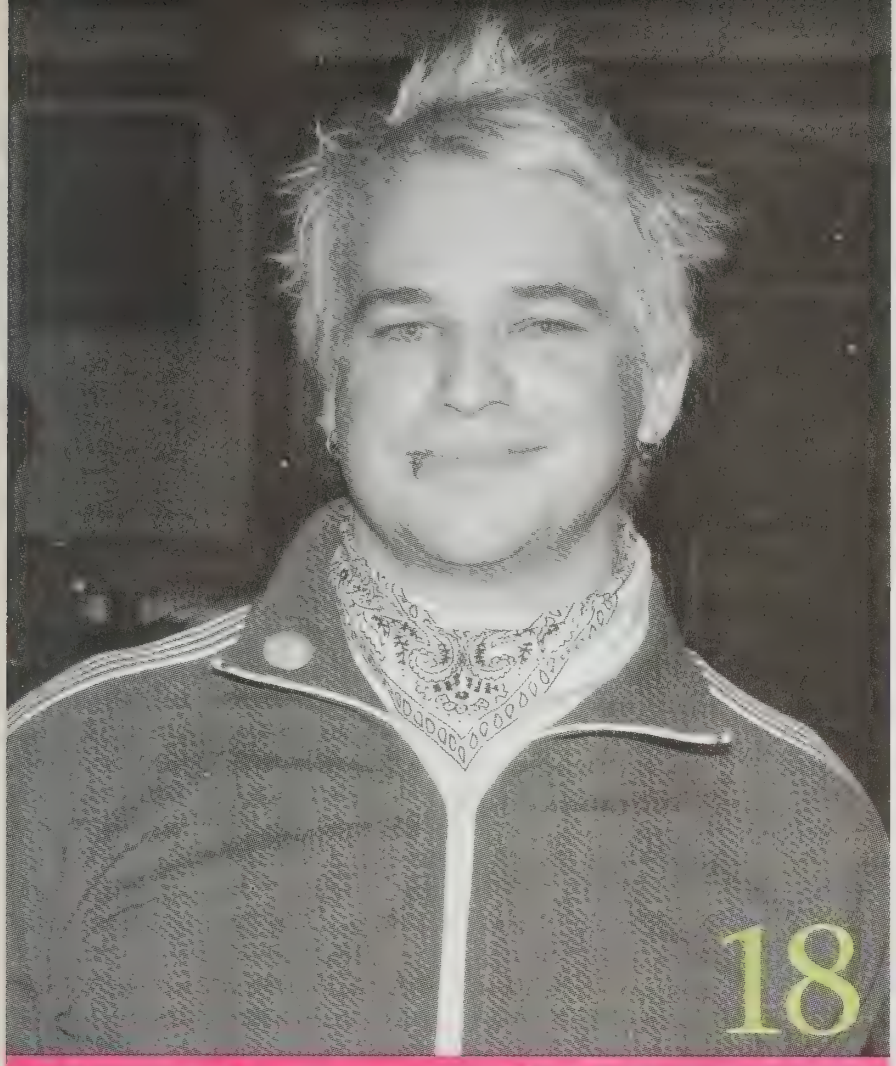
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Recipe of Hope

The postcolonial church rises





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THE MESSAGE QUEST

It is the ever-emergent cycle, renewing the faith. BY ANDREW FAIZ



The cover image this month is by Christian Worthington, a Winnipeg-based Christian artist. If you have any knowledge of painting technique and history, then you have already discerned Worthington has a deep interest in the classics. Still it is not a purely classical painting: the use of light and the texture of the blood comment on the traditional image. That's the wonder of Worthington: he's a classicist and a post-modernist and, most surprisingly, he looks like he's barely halfway through his twenties.

I met Worthington last summer in Winnipeg where I had a play during the annual Fringe festival. The play was housed in a "church." The Exchange Community Church, run by the Christian Missinary Alliance, is a storefront, with a kitchen, some offices and a sanctuary. On the one side of this church is a bar, on the other a gallery and at the back a traveller's hostel. The church is like none I've ever seen—mostly because it was populated by passionate young people like Worthington. Beards, beads, ribbons, second hand clothes, tattoos, laptops and tall cups of coffee were the uniform. God, salvation, social justice and action were the conversation. Most of the young people I met did not come from churchy families. The Message—to borrow Eugene Peterson's title—was their quest.

The church was open every morning and through it daily passed a steady stream of people. From local down-and-outs looking for help, to artists, musicians, others, just popping in for a visit. Some came to check their emails; others to make use of the wireless service. Some just came to pray, to meditate. In the evenings there were the theatre productions which had rented the sanctuary for the festival run. Neither of the plays had overt Christian themes, though both were stories of personal redemption, one from greed and the other from alcoholism. And after that, going to midnight or later, musical performers, some Christian. The place was always packed; the aroma of brewed coffee a constant. (Phil Wright, the pastor, makes a fantastic cappuccino.)

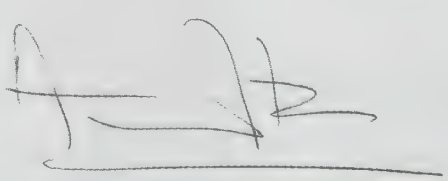
Though Wright would never refer to his church as part of the emergent movement (subject of this month's feature article by Alex MacLeod) and though the physical plant looks nothing at all like a church, it was one of holiest places I have been, because it was constantly alive, just like the faith it serves.

Christianity is always emergent—most famously when Martin Luther hung those theses on a door, but before that for centuries, and since, as many pored over The Message, and attempted to reinterpret it for their own times.

That has always been the Christian tradition, to constantly renew. Northrup Frye said the Bible is a revolutionary text. He was ordained in the United Church but he spoke those words as a professor of literature. And he meant them literally: The Bible opens with waking, with the birth, and ends with sleeping, with death. In its midst, it encompasses the full arc of life, of love and loss, of myriad challenges and endless blessings.

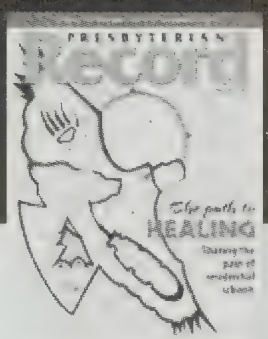
In Frye's Bible course, one of the exercises, strictly literary, never theological, was to go through our concordances and track the many ways a single image—like lamb, water or tree—was used throughout the Bible. The idea was to see how the same image is used in different ways, how it changes under different speakers, authors and circumstances. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, therefore, has a direct link to the Cross. I won't drag out the lesson, but it makes a good metaphor for the Christian life.

It is the ever-emergent cycle. Happy Easter—He is Risen. Again. May you too be ever-emergent. In Him.



Andrew Faiz

Letters



A promising Christ-walk

Thanks for an excellent issue on The Path to Healing: Sharing the Pain of Residential Schools (February). I appreciated the comprehensive historical overview and the detailed descriptions of our current ministries to and among aboriginal peoples. Readers are left with the feeling that though this was and is a sorrowful chapter in our church's history, nevertheless we are facing up to that experience with a truly gospel response through the confession of our complicity, compensation and practical ways of expressing our desire to walk together towards healing and reconciliation. The foundations for a new and partnered ministry are being laid in a relationship of trust building and for all of this we give thanks to God. It all makes the journey through Lent this year a much more promising Christ-walk.

JIM MCKAY SASK.

Common practice

Re The Opinionated Masses, January

Where in The Book of Forms does it say, "lay members can serve the sacraments?"

GORDON MACKINTOSH PORT COQUITLAM, B.C.

Andrew Faiz responds: It doesn't. But, it is common practice in the PCC for elders to serve the bread and the wine to the congregation, and to the minister.

Vessels of communications

I do respect and value Dr. McMillan's reply (January) to my letter (November 2006). It is with appreciation of his long Christian quest that I test his persuasion regarding global south Christians. There are many cultural areas in our world where 19th-century (and earlier) evangelism has not been refined. Where well-meaning, but unsophisticated missionary zeal has been proffered and innocently accepted. I don't think women's liberation is pertinent to this issue as the Muslim women's rights movement in the West should be considered as a Christian challenge to the myriad of misogynistic fundamental Christian churches that abound in North America. Having been a rep elder to East Toronto presbytery in the early 60s when the subject of ordination of women was being debated, it now seems incomprehensible that the issue existed such a short time ago.

It would appear to me that adherence to orthodoxy and the perpetuation of liturgical observances have impinged on the free expression of Christ's Holy Spirit.; that we, His vessels of communication, have and are not allowing our church an avenue of on-going reformation.

There are many contemporary and contemplative visionaries who are striving to enlighten us in our state of theological confusion. Again, I would mention John Spong, Karen Armstrong, Tom Harpur, Jeffrey Moses and Sam Harris. These are but a few who represent a tidal wave that we may taste the living waters that Christ offers us today.

ROBERT HARVEY SCARBOROUGH, ONT.

Remember you must die

This writer continues to suffer grievous pain, resultant from my beloved wife's death and fond memories of a marriage of 50 years' duration. Philip of Macedon

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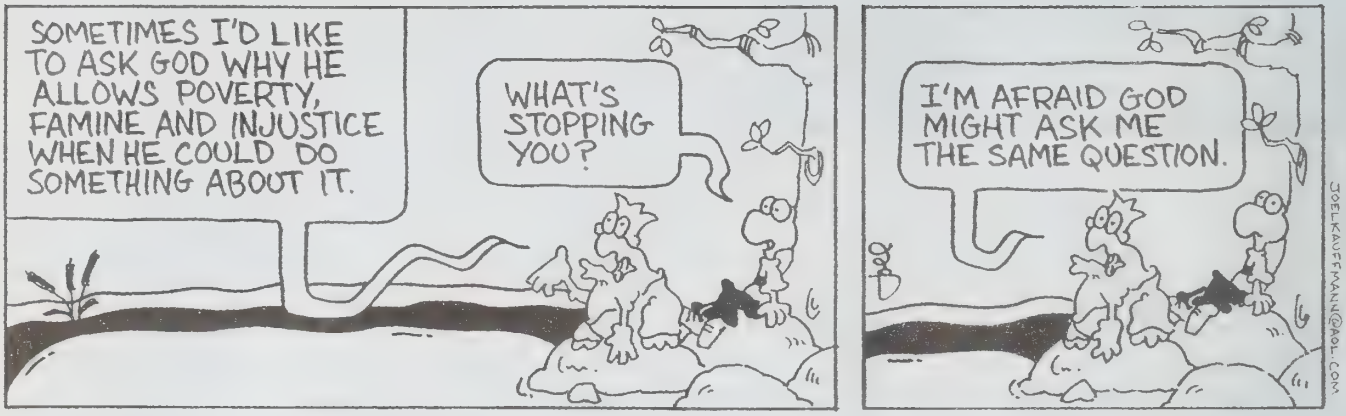
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Pontius' Puddle



gave a standing order to his slave to come into the King's presence every morning regardless of what the King was doing and say, "Philip, remember that you must die." We all die without exception. Modern humanism considers death only as an intrusion into our plans and an illusion.

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At the graveside, an artificial layer of grass covers the earth with its biblical symbolism of the body returning to the earth. The shedding of tears is a healthy reaction. It's just as non-Christian to pretend that we don't grieve for the loss of a loved one as it is un-Christian to mourn too long. Our Lord does not teach that death is unreal, but Christianity does teach that its pain, loss and heartbreak can be overcome by faith in Our Redeemer. St. Paul puts it into these wise words, "Neither death or anything else can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Christ's teachings support my abiding faith that death is not the end of everything. "The body is committed to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust; in sure and certain hope of the Resurrection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ." (*Anglican Book of Common Prayer.*)

REV. EVAN H. JONES LONDON, ONT.

Go where you're asked

Rev. August Basson of Lesotho is working in a rural area, among the people with the Africa Inland Mission. The ability of the people there to sustain themselves is in jeopardy due in part to the serious problem of erosion. We in the West have made the switch to conservation agriculture (where the soil is disturbed as little as possible). Our experience in this field has 20 years of trial and error so we have learned a lot. The main thing is that it works.

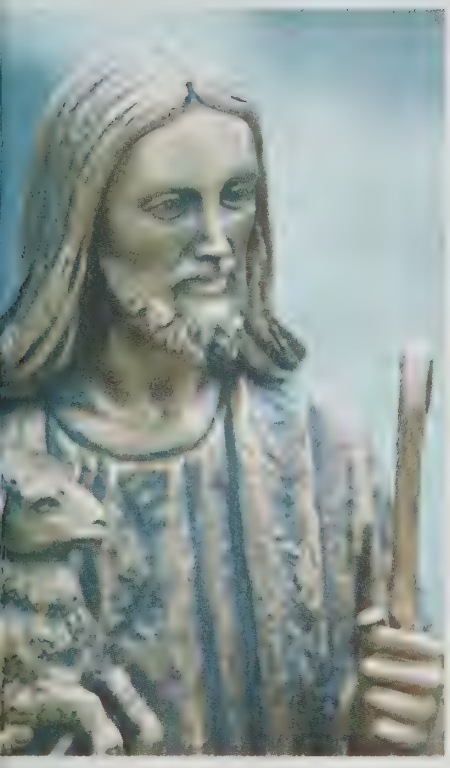
Basson invited my husband to encourage and help him and the farmers in Lesotho. Early November saw us hit the road for the journey to Durban, South Africa. We had a couple of days to recover from the trip and then Anita Basson came to get us and drive us to Tebellong, Lesotho.

Minister's wives are amazing people! We were total strangers landing on her doorstep to be housed and fed for the next 10 days. The children were gracious and fun.

The men got busy doing farming things. The machinery was different, built for the small fields that are farmed there, but the principles were the same. The culture and ways of farming were different from our experiences here and that's what made it more interesting. The men were not there to teach or preach. They were there to encourage and work with the farmers, which they did. They had many animated conversations about the way we do things at home and what would work in the new (to us) situation.

I had the opportunity to dig up some rusty physiotherapy skills and worked with a young boy who now owns a piece of my heart.

It was a wonderful experience. I can highly recommend it. Go where you're asked. Do what you can and you will be a blessing as well as being richly blessed. There are a great many of us who are in a position to be able to take time to travel, explore and share. There is always the



problem of knowing where our talents can be used and I'm not sure of the best way to solve that. Got any ideas?

CANDI SCHOPFER CHAUVIN, ALTA.

Standard of excellence

Re By The Numbers, January

Be it a large or small congregation the standard of excellence to which all Christians must aspire is Jesus Christ. I don't recall reading in scripture anything about doing church by the numbers. Size really doesn't matter. Read your Bible. It's all there. High expectations? Recognizing gifts? Of course. Speaking different languages? Unless Rev. Bush means speaking in tongues, I hope the only language that Presbyterians (including Presbyteries) are using is the language of love. We are called as God's people to nothing less. Now that's what I call a standard of excellence!

CAROL ANN KEYS EXETER, ONT.

Credit found

Ple-e-e-ase give credit where credit is due. It would appear that the Good Shepherd and the Lamb is a bronze statue. I would like to know more about it and where it could be seen. It is so beautiful and some of us receive more messages from art.

JEAN JANES WATFORD, ONT.

Editor notes: The image was taken from a graphic designers' stock resource. The photographer, who identified himself only as Bernd, wrote from Germany to explain, "It was a small statue on a gravestone somewhere in southern Germany. I went in very close since it was only 20 centimetres in height."

With a capital V

Re Renewal, January

Rev. Calvin Brown defends himself over and over again, even frequently referring to scripture but he never refers to, nor claims, that well-known pronouncement of Isaiah which we hear every Christmas. Isaiah makes no reference to Christ's birth nor His mother's virginity as having any relevance in any way to His authority in acting the way He did or for teaching what He taught; nor does Isaiah refer to Jesus' birth circumstances as proof that His authority came from His Father.

John the Baptist from prison asks Jesus, "Are you He who is to come…" What did Jesus reply? Did He try to reassure John by reminding him that His mother was a virgin (with a capital V)? Did He mention His mother at all in His reply? No.

"No good reason to believe Jesus is really God?" It seems that was good enough for Jesus!

MARION BALLARD MARKHAM, ONT.

Editor writes: *Erin Walton created the Called To Wonder for March. We're sorry her byline was not included.*

Also, in our February issue we stated that Stewart Folster was the first native person to be ordained in the Presbyterian Church. In fact, Gordon Williams graduated from Presbyterian College in 1968 and is on the appendix to the roll in the Presbytery of Ottawa.

BUILDING HOPE

Easter is a time of hope. Every day Flora House brings hope to inner city children.

It is 3:30 on Monday and the sounds of children's voices can be heard upstairs and down at Flora House. The after-school program is in full swing. Some children are working on reading skills, while others are enjoying a snack. Soon, a group of children will go off in the large red van to Graffiti Gallery to participate in art activities. One young person receives a sticker for showing polite behaviour. He is all smiles because he is earning points to participate in a special activity. "Don't forget your bathing suit for swimming lessons tomorrow," one girl reminds her friend. A mom drops by, delighted to say that the school has reported an improvement in her daughter's reading. Another young boy anxiously requests his chance to be the goalie for sports day on Thursday. "What are we cooking on Friday?" a small child wants to know.

WICM

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Out of his five decades in ministry Rev. Fred H. Rennie served St. John's, Cornwall, Ont., for 27 years, from 1975 – 2001. In January the congregation dedicated his former office as The Rennie Heritage Room, and honoured him as Minister Emeritus. Ken Gosling who created the dedicatory plaque, and current minister Ruth Draffin, present Rennie and his wife Johneen with these tokens of their high regard.



People Places

For more People & Places submissions, please visit our website: www.presbyterianrecord.ca

Hugh Lloyd is well past counting the candles on the annual cake, and that was why staff at church offices had to surprise him into celebrating his birthday in January. A long-time member at St. Andrew's, King St., Toronto, Lloyd has been volunteering at church offices, in a variety of different departments, for 15 years. He may not like birthdays, but he sure does provide a good reason for a party.

The M&M's of St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, a newly formed group for service and study, have taken on the School Breakfast Program for three of the public elementary schools in the church's neighbourhood. The picture represents some of the food that was collected. The group also made toques to donate to the kindergarten classes and members of the congregation donated mitts. This is the second food drive undertaken with the support of the congregation.

Those present in the photograph are; (Back row) Carol Ormston, Ella Koop-Baxter, Peggy Christie, Margaret Moncrieff, Chris Pascall, Roseanne Laity and Sandra Rhodes. (Front Row) Chris Thomson, Erin Ferlaino, Carol Jean Iacucci, Paula Vallee and Susan Slabbert. Missing: Jennifer Bouchard.



In remembrance of Margaret Holderney, long-time member of Knox, St. Catharines, Ont., her family presented two silver communion chalices which were dedicated in November. Seen here are Rev. Graham Kennedy, Jane Melaragni, Tony Melargni, Michael Holderney, Herb Holderney, Scott Holdreney, Joyce Hogendoorn, Peter Hogendoorn, Carolynn Holderney, Wayne Holderney, Margaret Stewart, clerk of session, and Dawn Holderney. Seated up front: Suzy Holderney, Stephen Malargni, Christopher Melargni and Katie Holderney. Missing from the photo are Melissa Hogendoorn, Scott Hogendoorn, Christopher Hogendoorn, Sandra Holderney and Kevin Holderney. The entire family are regular attendants. Next year they may have to donate extra pews to hold themselves.





On January 11, Ernest (Ernie) MacPherson, the oldest living resident of Prince Edward Island, celebrated his 108th birthday. He is a member of West Point, P.E.I, where he was ordained as an elder in 1949. He became clerk of session at the same time and held that office until 1984. As well, he was appointed as representative elder to the Presbytery of Prince Edward Island from 1961 to 1980. He remained an active elder for a few years after that; and was a long time member of the choir. Ernie has three daughters, 11 grandchildren, 30 great-grandchildren and 12 great-great-grandchildren.

She hasn't lost anything—certainly not her sense of humour. Elsie Maddock of St. Andrew's, New Liskeard, Ont., turned 100 last November. She told a local newspaper, "I've outlived a lot of my friends and neighbours. It's a corker, isn't it?" She also told the hapless reporter, "Did you ask if I stopped working when I had a family? That's when I really started to work!" Her son, Rev. Wayne Maddock, read her a greeting from the Prime Minister, and here she's seen with Rev. Janice Hamalainen.



HAD CAKE LATELY? Share your celebrations with the rest of the church. Send your stories to PnP@presbyterianrecord.ca along with your digital photographs, 300 dpi minimum, high quality JPEGs. Or mail the photographs to: The Record, 50 Wynford Dr., Toronto, M3C 1J7.
To be considered for People and Places, photographs should be sharp and everyone clearly identified. The Record reserves the right to reject any photos not of sufficient quality. Photographs cannot be returned.



SPOTLIGHT

Community college students near Chennai, India, can receive hands-on training in things like nursing and computers. Below: Indian women share their small business experiences at a gathering last fall.



More Money for PWS&D

PRESBYTERIAN WORLD SERVICE AND DEVELOPMENT recently received an additional $200,000 from the Canadian International Development Agency for new projects. Along with more than $66,000 from PWS&D, the funds will help the church's overseas partners expand their current development work and have an even greater impact on vulnerable communities. The new money, secured in January, will augment the $458,000 PWS&D received from CIDA for 2006-2007 under a five-year agreement.

Some of the projects that will benefit from the additional funds include:

• Ekwendeni Hospital in Malawi will purchase equipment to help monitor the health of people living with HIV and identify when they need anti-retroviral therapy to help them stay healthy.

• The Church of North India will purchase furniture and equipment for HIV Care Centres at 15 of their hospitals. These centres will provide HIV testing and counselling and help people living with HIV and AIDS access medicine and other basic needs. The CNI will also provide sewing machines for income-generating projects.

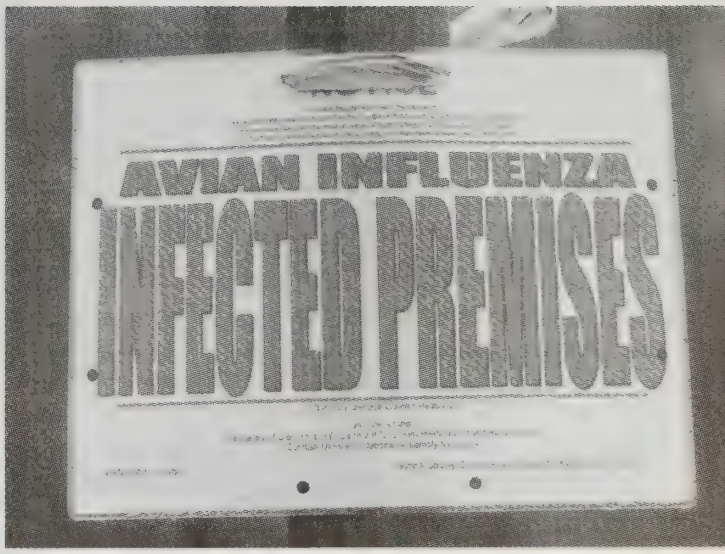
• Roofs for the Roofless will improve evening tutoring classes for children near Chennai, India, by installing solar lighting systems in their night schools, taking the children on special educational tours and purchasing books, notebooks and general supplies for the classes. The agency will also purchase computers, sewing machines and nursing lab equipment for its community college, which provides post-secondary practical training for youth from poor communities.

• India's Madurai Non-formal Education Centre will train 30 women in community health work and establish a center for voluntary HIV counseling and testing, and provide care and support to people living with HIV.

• In El Salvador, the Institute for Research, Training and Development of Women will provide loans to help groups of women start small businesses in animal husbandry, vegetables and small retail and service industries. *–AM with files from PWS&D*

Preparing for Pandemics

Missionaries, national staff have role to play. BY AMY MACLACHLAN



The Spanish Flu of 1918, the Asian Flu of 1957 and the Hong Kong Flu of 1968, all of which had their origins in bird flu, resulted in 40- to 50-million deaths. But new strains of avian-related viruses are potentially even more dangerous today. "Humans have no immunity to them," said Dr. Michael Markus, a consultant in occupational medicine and travellers' health. "And as it jumps to other species that are closer to humans, it means the virus is getting more efficient."

Markus was speaking at The Global Preparedness Forum, organized by the Canadian Churches Forum for Global Ministries. The need for faith-based organizations to develop a pandemic response policy is obvious. They are constantly sending missionaries into potential pandemic zones. Websites such as the World Health Organization and the Centre for Disease Control should be consulted. Consular access in the foreign country should be established, and lists of local medical providers should be created.

Although not specific to pandemics, the Presbyterian Church does have an emergency plan for its missionaries. If a threat is perceived, the Life and Missions Agency's general secretary and International Ministries' associate secretary will consult, taking into account advice from partners in the affected area along with governmental warnings. These two people will also meet with the executive director of PWS&D and the International Ministries' administrator, forming the Crisis Management Team. This consultation will determine whether missionaries can/should be evacuated, and how to go about it.

At the national office, the management team (comprising the three principal secretaries in finance, Assembly Office and the Life and Mission Agency) is responsible to work with the lead public health body whenever a health risk exists, and to have sufficient funding available to meet necessary needs. "We monitor advisories from the lead public health department, implement their recommendations and communicate with our staff," said Rev. Rick Fee, on behalf of the church's management team.

The Presbyterian Church is also a part of the Canadian Council of Churches' National Advisory Group on Emergency Planning. Among other things, the group exists to help CCC-member churches prepare for carrying on their ministries in times of emergency, and to be prepared to offer practical, organized assistance to municipal authorities or the armed forces as requested.

Missionaries are informed that they should take responsibility for their own well-being, recognizing that they are often in a better position to know exactly what is going on at the local level and what actions they should take. "The threat of a future flu pandemic and the consequences that this might have for the well-being of our missionaries overseas must be taken seriously and should not be minimized," said Ron Wallace, associate secretary for International Ministries. "At the same, time, however, it must be remembered that a flu pandemic is only one of many possible dangers, medical and otherwise, that our missionaries must deal with on an ongoing basis, including the possibility of civil and inter-religious strife, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, a malaria pandemic that kills more than one in five persons in many countries, and resurgent strains of tuberculosis that are also a major source of mortality in many parts of the world."

In the event of a pandemic, missionaries will likely be used as resources—especially as agents to control fear. "Missionaries are often spiritual leaders or consultants," said Dr. Ken Gamble, a doctor at the Missionary Health Institute in Toronto, speaking at the seminar.

Preparation for a pandemic is a useful tool that can aid missionaries in teaching those they work with about health, hygiene and food preparation—especially in areas where people are more worried about having enough to eat than pandemic preparedness. "They can help develop environments that prevent the development of these problems," said Gamble.

Markus said a full-blown pandemic would result in absenteeism from work of about 50 per cent. The public sector, schools and community centres will close, governments will run on a skeleton crew, even funerals and public gatherings for grieving may be stopped. It will be the private sector, according to Markus, that will "need to figure out how to keep society going," and many businesses already have contingency plans on how to run essential services in the event of an outbreak. "Life as we know it will change," he said.

REAP and You Shall Grow

Last chance to attend evangelism conference. BY AMY MACLACHLAN

THE THIRD AND FINAL INSTALLMENT of the annual REAP evangelism conference gets underway on May 11 and 12, and will focus on "growing deeper" by examining the idea that evangelism and discipleship are inseparable, with each needing the other and thriving in one another's presence.

Promising to bring participants "Relevant, Effective, Accessible and Practical information on outreach and evangelism in today's world," the conference is an initiative of the Presbytery of Hamilton, but it has grown beyond the presbytery's bounds. The past two conferences have reached more than 400 participants from 50 congregations and five denominations.

"It's been a blessing," said Rev. Fred Stewart, one of the conference organizers and minister at the Carluke and Binbrook charge. "REAP is bigger than we are. It has a life of its own."

Despite its success, some have said that REAP is too loud and too un-Presbyterian. "But we can see hope in the lives and hearts of the people who come to REAP, and they come away equipped," said Rev. Garfield Havemann, another of the main organizers and minister at Chedoke, Hamilton.



The conference grew so large, in fact, that it moved from Chedoke after its first year to Redeemer University College in Hamilton.

"What REAP wanted to do was call individuals, churches, presbyteries—the denomination—to challenge the maintenance mindset, and move to a heart-set; to growth," said Stewart. "The conversation is on-going, but the question is always, how do we do it?"

The idea for REAP was born during the FLAMES year of evangelism back in 2003, when presbyteries were encouraged to hold workshops on this topic. But Stewart had other ideas, and after sharing them with Havemann and others, they approached the presbytery and gained permission to form a study group on hosting a large-scale evangelism conference.

"REAP's first conference focused on the why," said Havemann. "Why do this? Do we understand the call of God? Do we understand the work necessary to be an evangelizing people? The second was about practical outreach; we understand the call and heart of God, so now how do we do this? The third one is about discipleship. We learned the why and how, so where does this lead? When you get to the end of number three, it should bring you back to the first, and back to the whys of the gospel."

To make the final conference as accessible as possible, admission for ministers is free if they bring along two guests, and students get in at a reduced rate. A huge worship event is planned for the Friday night, and the conference features four main sessions plus 16 practical and interactive workshops. Glen Soderholm along with The Witnesses (a praise band composed of young presbytery members) will lead worship during the conference.

"Taking on Jesus as Lord and Saviour is not the goal or the destination; it's a starting point. A step to create other followers," said Stewart. "It's about being relational, and it's driven by that.

"We haven't changed the denomination or the presbytery," he continued, "but in our churches, it has made a big difference. There's a sense of something significant happening. And I suspect I know whose spirit of grace is making this happen."

Visit www.reapconference.org for more information.

163rd CONVOCATION

Wednesday, May 9, 2007
7:30 p.m.
Convocation Hall,
University of Toronto
Everyone Welcome!

❖❖❖

Convocation address by
Patricia Sheerattan-Bisnauth

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College Honours Joseph McLelland



THE LIBRARY AT THE PRESBYTERIANCOLLEGE, Montreal, is being renamed in honour of Rev. Dr. Joseph C. McLelland, moderator of the General Assembly in 1985, in recognition and celebration of his 50-year association with the college.

"McLelland's work as a scholar, teacher, administrator, leader and mentor in theological education has shaped generations of students and ministers," said Rev. Dr. John Vissers, the college's principal, in a press release. "We've been truly blessed to have him as part of our community of faith and learning for over five decades."

McLelland joined the Presbyterian College faculty in 1957 as the Robert Professor of the Philosophy of Religion. He was appointed to the McConnell Chair of the Philosophy of Religion at McGill University's Faculty of Religious Studies. He holds honorary degrees from the Montreal Diocesan Theological College and Knox College.

A special dedication event marking the renaming of the library will take place this fall.

Record Appeal

Presbyterian Record publisher David Harris reported an astonishing response to the 2006 fundraising effort, with an increase of 17 per cent over the 2005 effort. About 2,000 of the magazine's 37,000 subscribers contributed more than $103,000.

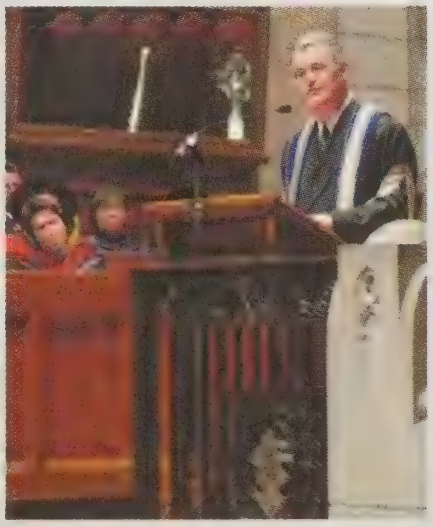
"I am overwhelmed by the generosity of our readers," said Harris. "The appeal is crucial to our financial well-being. This will help us expand our coverage of the church's work in Canada and around the world and permit us to invest in a more vibrant and engaging web presence."



Graduation Time

Presbyterian College, Montreal
When: May 10, 2007 at 7.30 p.m.
Where: Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul, Montreal
Guest speaker: Rev. Dr. Stephen Farris, Dean of St. Andrew's Hall and Professor of Homiletics and Biblical Interpretation at the Vancouver School of Theology.
Doctor of Divinity, honoris causa: Rev. Chuck Congram, recently retired senior minister, Lakeshore St. Andrew's, Tecumseh, Ont., and Rev. Andrew Johnston, minister, St. Andrew's, Ottawa.

St. Andrew's Hall, Vancouver School of Theology
When: May 7, 2007 at 7:00 p.m.



Where: St. Andrew's-Wesley United Church, Vancouver
Guest speaker: Mark MacDonald, bishop over all Aboriginal Anglicans.
Doctor of Divinity, honoris causa: Louise Rolston (United Church of Canada), past VST board chair and former chair of the Landmark Legacy Campaign, and Conrad Guelke (Anglican Church of Canada), former chair of the VST Property Management Corp., which oversaw the development of VST lands.

Knox College
When: May 9, 2007 at 7:30 p.m.
Where: Convocation Hall, University of Toronto
Guest speaker: Rev. Patricia Sheerattan-Bisnauth, Executive Secretary for Church Renewal, Justice and Partnership of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, and the first woman to be ordained in the Guyana Presbyterian Church.
Doctor of Divinity, honoris causa: Andrew Donaldson, worship leader, musician and composer, with extensive experience in global, contemporary and classical worship music. Donaldson was part of the task force that produced the 1997 Book of Praise. He has offered worship leadership for more than 25 years at Beaches, Toronto, and now at Trafalgar, Oakville.

"Let my heart be broken with the things that break the heart of God."



World Vision's founder, Bob Pierce, wrote those words on the flyleaf of his Bible almost 60 years ago. It was during the Korean War, and he was deeply moved by the suffering of the children he saw around him.

Back home, he couldn't forget the children. Motivated by Jesus' compassion toward them, he began recruiting friends to help. That's how World Vision was born.

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Your $35 monthly sponsorship will also help provide access to schools, clinics and skills such as agricultural training that benefit your sponsored child's family and the entire community.

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To sponsor a child, mail this form today.

Or call 1 800 268-1650.

World Vision is a Christian relief, development, and advocacy organization dedicated to working with children, families, and communities to overcome poverty and injustice. As followers of Jesus, we are motivated by God's love to serve all people regardless of race, religion, gender, or ethnicity.

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Send my child's photo right away. I prefer to sponsor a: ☐ Boy ☐ Girl
living in: ☐ Africa ☐ Asia ☐ Latin America ☐ wherever the need is greatest
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CARD NO. EXP DATE

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World Vision

Committee Says No to Wicca, Paganism

WHILE DISCUSSING WHAT IT MEANS to be an interfaith committee, the question of "appreciating" the specific faith traditions of Wiccans, pagans and other faith groups was ultimately voted down by the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee at its February meeting.

The committee was discussing its revised mandate, sparked by the addition of "interfaith" to the committee's name in 2004—a change the committee believes points to the international church's growing desire to celebrate and affirm not only all Christian communities, but to also seek new and healthy relationships with other religions and those who practice them.

Rev. Mark Lewis said it would be "a huge step forward" to recognize "the worth and value of all traditions."

Nonetheless, while agreeing to "acknowledge, understand and appreciate" other faith traditions in general, the committee decided not to add the following paragraph: "The faith traditions with which we seek good relationships include but are not limited to Judaism, Islam, Native spirituality, Baha'ism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, Paganism, Shintoism, Sikhism, Unitarianism, Wiccanism and Zoroastrianism."

Some committee members expressed concern about the call "to appreciate" traditions such as Wicca and Paganism. They argued it is one thing to appreciate the people who practice them, but another to appreciate the tradition itself.

Committee member Janette McIntosh argued, "To appreciate doesn't mean to give up our faith, but to appreciate that others feel just as strongly for their faith as we feel for ours."

The new mandate is a reflection of section 9.2.1 of *Living Faith*, which says, among other things, "We recognize that truth and goodness in [other religions] are the work of God's Spirit, the author of all truth. We should not address others in a spirit of arrogance … But rather in a spirit of humility…"

The new mandate will go to General Assembly for final approval. *–AM*

Journeying in Faith to the Middle East Conflict

And giving support in some small way. BY DOUG LACKIE

The Presbyterian Record ran an advertisement last spring that just grabbed me. Here was an opportunity for mission in the Holy Land, a mission to walk where Jesus walked, attempting in some small way to bring justice, solidarity and presence to those being persecuted. Before retirement, I was the owner of a manufacturing company, experienced in interviewing job applicants. I now found myself in the opposite situation being interviewed by a dozen or so professional mission staff at PCC offices in Toronto. They were candid about the personal challenges I would face should I take on this mission to Palestine/Israel.

The Ecumenical Accompaniment Program for Palestine and Israel was initiated in 2002 by the World Council of Churches, of which The Presbyterian Church in Canada is one of 340 members. The role of each Ecumenical Accompanier is to be a witness to human rights violations as outlined in the UN Declaration of Human Rights and the fourth Article of the Geneva Convention. It is also an opportunity to be an advocate and give support to Christian, Muslim and Israeli peace organizations and activists; and to report to the sending churches and to the WCC events relating to the Arab/Israeli conflict.

I was pleased to be the first Presbyterian given this opportunity. Every three months a new group of EAs replaces the last one. The size of a group varies; the current group has 16, while others have had as many as 25. On arrival and after orientation, we will be assigned to towns and villages scattered throughout the West Bank including Bethlehem, Hebron, Jerusalem, Yanoun, Ramallah and Tulkarem.

My family has been supportive throughout the process, but with a sense of concern. Getting ready for this mission has involved studying the history of the Jewish and Palestinian people, examining the culture and lifestyle changes of Palestinians since Israel's declaration of nationhood, and learning more about the recognition of Israel by the United Nations and Canada in 1948, with several Arab states denying this new identity.

I've learned much about the building of the "separation barrier" by Israel that limits freedom of movement for Palestinians within their own territory that was assigned to them by the U.N. in 1947, and the ongoing trauma faced daily by the Palestinian and Israeli peoples since the 1948, 1967 and 1973 wars. The peace process between the Jewish state and the Palestinians will be addressed only when UN Resolution 242 is adhered to. (Unanimously adopted in 1967, the resolution calls for the "withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict," for the recognition of all established states and their political independence, and the establishment of peace and security.)

The conflict between the Jewish state of Israel and the largely Islamic Arab population in the West Bank calls for Christians to be concerned and aware of human rights abuses, and of the pros and cons of the Israel/Palestine conflict as it affects both groups. Both are victims. As Christians we have an obligation to influence our government; to express our desire for a just peace for both sides in this bloody conflict.

To learn more about the program please go to www.eappi.org.

Doug Lackie left for the Middle East in March. He will be posted in Jerusalem



Doug Lackie with Rev. Dr. Randall Benson on the day he was commissioned for his journey at Claude, Caledon, Ont.



Non-event has clarity

ENI–The World Social Forum, which brought together 70,000 activists, including many faith-based organizations, from around the planet, in Nairobi, Kenya in February, was declared a "non-event for world media" by some commentators. The BBC criticized the forum for "a growing lack of focus that drains it of political impact." Bishop Mvume Dandala, general secretary of the All Africa Conference of Churches, a grouping of 134 churches and 35 national councils of churches representing 300 million Christians, responded by saying, "I am a bit disappointed with the attention that the international media seem to pay to [the World Economic Forum in] Davos, Switzerland, at the expense of recording what the poor gathered here tried to say. The message here has been clear: The dominant economic system ignores the plight of the poor of our countries. As long as the issue of poverty is not tackled adequately by the developed world, any talk of overcoming terrorism is just a waste of time; as long as the gap between the rich and the poor keeps growing, you can forget about democracy and stability in our countries. Can the message be any clearer?"

Crunching for creches

ENI– A proposal by Germany's family minister to triple the number of day care spots for young children by 2013 has led to disagreement between Protestant and Roman Catholic bishops. German day cares, known as crèches, are mostly run by churches or local authorities. There are few child-care facilities for children under three.

The Catholic bishop of Augsburg, Walter Mixa, condemned the plans to provide financial incentives for more creches as reducing women to the status of "child-bearing machines." He called the minister's policies "hostile to children and blinded by ideology" which favoured working women.

But Wolfgang Huber, Germany's top Protestant bishop, said his church supported the proposals and would create more places in the creches that it administers. "It's not appropriate to label women who want to use these places as being child-bearing machines," he told a news service.

Nuns were tougher

ENI–Poland's Roman Catholic nuns withstood pressure from the communist-era secret police far more robustly than male clergy, some new research shows.

"It's obviously hard to make comparisons," said Jolanta Olech, president of Poland's Conference of Superiors of Female Religious Orders. "But the documentation shows nuns proved much tougher than priests." The Ursuline order nun was speaking as investigations continued into the Polish church's infiltration by the communist-era secret police, who "determined efforts" to find agents among Poland's 27,000 nuns. Interior ministry files suggest no more than 30 were recruited nationwide during the 1980s, a hundred times fewer than in the case of Roman Catholic priests.

From liberation to mission

ENI–Rev. Israel Batista, general secretary of the Latin American Council of Churches presented a report at the fifth assembly of the church grouping's highest governing showing a shift in membership and focus. The Latin American church was once seen as a bastion of liberation theology. But some delegates noted that in recent years it has moved closer to the mushrooming Pentecostal and Evangelical churches which are outstripping the traditional Protestant and Roman Catholic churches in membership growth.

"We should recognize that, in these last decades, some Christians have understood that the proposal of the Gospel and the following of Jesus imply taking responsibility for one's neighbour and the development of a certain dimension of human beings and their rights," said Batista. "In this sense, the societal commitment and the necessity to work for a more just society, oriented towards the development of every individual, brought many to consider that the work of diakonia (service to society) was not separated from the life and mission of the Church."

He asserted: "It follows that diakonia (service) and evangelization form part of the one whole Mission and that they do not possess different values, but they complement each other. They are two sides of the same coin."

Some Pentecostal churches have misgivings about the relationship in ecumenical bodies of traditional Protestant churches with the Roman Catholic Church and others have been uneasy about what has been called a "social Gospel."

Show the money

ENI– "God sends his angels in times of disasters. These are the angels God sent to us when we stood stunned unable to decide what to do next," said V. K. Equbal, a Muslim, of a Christian project to build a disaster shelter and community centre at a Muslim-majority village in southern India hit by the December 2005 tsunami.

The multipurpose disaster shelter is being built by the Churches Auxiliary for Social Action, the social welfare wing of 24 Protestant and Orthodox churches in India.

CASA, with the support of Action by Churches Together (ACT) International, has already built 85 disaster-resistant houses in the village where most of the 200 dwellings were swept away by the earthquake-triggered tsunami.

"We could have never dreamt of building a house like this in our lifetime," said C. K. Kunjappan, a Hindu, as he stood inside his 40-square-metre home built by the church agency at a cost of about $6,000.

Power and Purpose

Theological reflection on the summer's pending geek-fest. BY JOHN CROWDIS



Assuming that the media has done its job, the hype surrounding the impending blockbuster movie season should be kicking into high gear by now. One of those titles coming fast and furious down the pipe is the third installment of the *Spiderman* movie franchise. The first two have a great track record… I must admit my more literary and theological side likes it when I get to "geek out" about the surprising theological depth of something usually better known for its special effects.

What intrigues me about this new *Spiderman* film is the introduction of the black suit plotline, and the inevitable new villains. *Spiderman* has always been about a young man's struggle with a tremendous gift, and the immense responsibility that goes with it. Without giving too much away, in the original comic series, the dark suit plotline was a metaphor for one's own struggle with temptation and seeking redemption.

Layered onto this, of course, are the first two films. The first *Spiderman* introduced us to the young-and-nerdy Peter Parker wrestling with great power that literally came up and bit him. "With great power comes great responsibility," Uncle Ben said to him. It would be a lesson that Parker would learn the hard way. His own choices contrast with those of Norman Osbourne, the Green Goblin, whose own powers and choice lead him down a very different and dark path. *Spiderman 2* picks up this theme again, but contrasts it with a sense of one's calling, one's own purpose in life, and how much the choices that we make really do matter. As with the first film, the development of Doctor Octopus is a vast improvement over the two-dimensional four-colour villain from the comic books. As tragic contrasts to Parker's own struggles, the villains help move the story forward in a way that transcends the action sequences. *Spiderman 3* has the potential to continue this with the story of the black suit. Originally introduced in the comics in 1984, the black suit infuses Parker with even more power than he had before—amplifying his own struggles with power and responsibility—but also unleashing a terrifying dark side that Parker must struggle with before it masters him. These themes of personal choices, power, responsibility, calling, purpose and trying to find a way to balance it all are things we struggle with as human beings and as Christians.

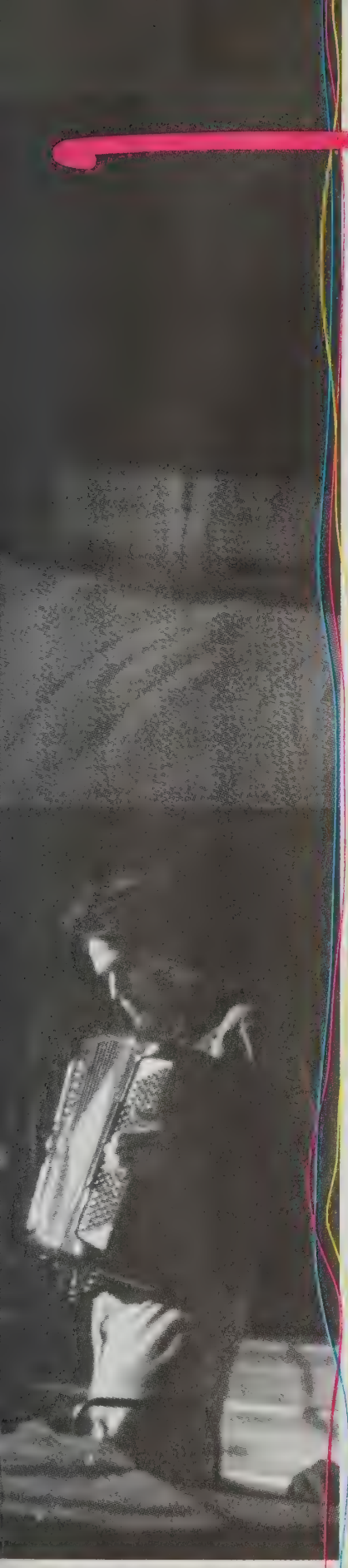
These are strong theological themes that occasionally bubble their way to the surface in what is often otherwise unremarkable Hollywood fare. One does not have to go to overtly Christian films to be able to pick up on what are clearly biblical themes. In fact, I find films like this far more satisfying, because there's a genuine depth to them that's worth exploring. My experience with overtly Christian films is that they tend to be overwrought and preachy, and often have excessively sweet endings that would make even the Care Bears reach for insulin. Ironically, I find Spiderman far more realistic because his struggles are genuine.

While God may not have a guest-starring role in these films, the stories and metaphors have a great deal of resonance with people born in the last third of the 20th-century. It's what we're watching, it's what we're listening to, it's what we're thinking about. Stories like this resonate with us, because they appeal to imagination and possibility, but they also connect with our anxieties, hopes and fears. It's not that hard to bring God into the conversation, because God's already there in the midst of it. When it comes to temptation and redemption, God has something to say. That's nothing new!

Rev. John Crowdis is minister at Clarkson Road, Mississauga, Ont.



Scenes from a Freedomize worship on a chilly Sunday evening in March: Dylan Royal, top left; the emerging Sue Erickson, lead deacon with a killer smile; a praise band; and worship leader Leah Hunter.



Recipe of Hope

A postcolonial church rises again from the words and actions of Jesus Christ.

BY ALEX MACLEOD • PHOTOGRAPHY BY MAEGAN GUERETTE

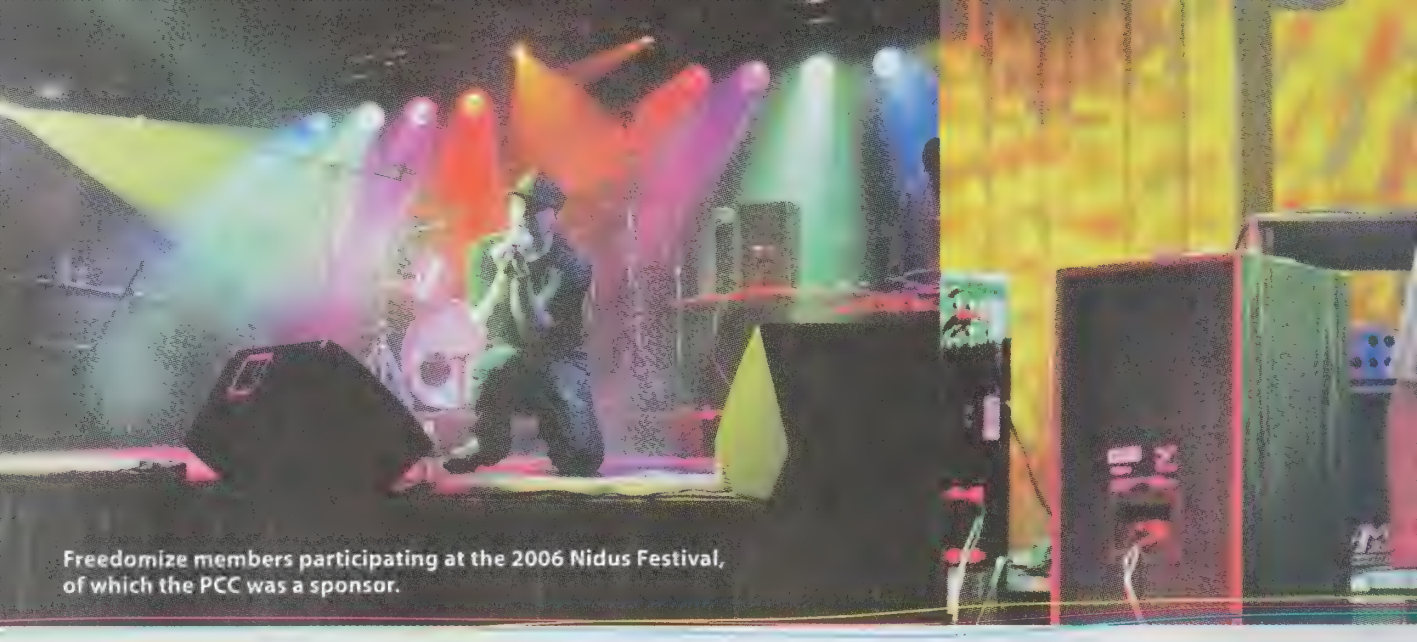
When I first met Sue, her shaved head highlighted her great smile. Later, when her hair re-emerged, it was purple before she settled on a more mature fluorescent pink. She liked to saunter around the church in ostentatiously bell-bottomed jeans and an array of crazy colourful clothes.

Sue was initially involved in a Presbyterian congregation in downtown Toronto while studying engineering at the University of Toronto. She went with her friends. But the match was not made in ecclesiastical heaven. Her vocabulary does not include the word institution and now she does church elsewhere. Today, eight years since I first met her, she has five part-time jobs and she does them because she likes them—she likes the variety, the flexible hours, she even likes believing in a few of them. Having graduated at the top of her class in one of the most challenging undergraduate programs in the country, she practically defies anyone to call her a slacker. She doesn't fit the stereotype.

Sue is what they call "emerging."

She is also one of the most passionate Christians I know. Sue loves church. She's a key leader in the Christian community where she now participates. She doesn't view her church involvement as duty. For her, it's friends, it's music, it's serious, it's playful, it's philosophy, it's purpose, it's real, it's everyday conversion, it's a beach-head building against her habitual cynicism, it's discipline, it's fun, it's green, it's growing, it's peace—all grounded in Jesus Christ.

You'll find Sue at the grassroots of a broad trend in North American church life that has come to be called the Emerging Church. Most view this development, for good or ill, as the result of young people choosing to bypass traditional religious institutions as they express their Christian faith in the language and forms of the new and emerging



Freedomize members participating at the 2006 Nidus Festival, of which the PCC was a sponsor.

She doesn't view her church involvement as duty. For her, it's friends, it's music, it's serious, it's playful, it's philosophy, it's purpose, it's real, it's everyday conversion—all grounded in Jesus Christ

postmodern culture in which they have grown up.

Brian McLaren, on the other hand, occupies headier airspace. Known as the theologian of choice for many of the Emerging movement's leaders, he is an English teacher who became a pastor and then a best-selling author—no past seminary education for this guru of postmodern spirituality.

McLaren dislikes the term Emerging Church. He sees it as potentially divisive. He wants to avoid any misunderstanding that a church emerging might be pitted against others supposedly stagnant or less legitimate. But Emergent is nonetheless the name of an organization he chairs: Emergent Village (emergentvillage.com) described on its website as "a growing, generative friendship among missional Christians seeking to love our world in the Spirit of Jesus Christ." Still, it has a board of directors.

"Emergent is primarily a network of friendships," explains McLaren without alluding to boards of any kind. "It started as a conversation among a group of us who were frustrated that the churches seemed to be missing the point. It's a loose coalition of people asking the same questions about the culture, coming at them from very different angles, and not really satisfied with any of the answers, but continuing to talk and write and think and pray and engage in ministry along the way."

In the 1990s, while serving as the senior pastor of Cedar Ridge Community Church, near Washington, D.C., McLaren became increasingly disturbed by the gap between the church world and the ongoing cultural shift that has been described as postmodernism. In response, he wrote his first book, *The Church on the Other Side: Doing Ministry in the Postmodern Matrix*.

"It might come as a great shock to you," says McLaren, testing my mainline mettle with his unPresbyterian unpredictability. "But I rarely use the word postmodern these days. The cultural problem we face is better identified as postcolonial. Christianity has long carried itself as a civil religion—a religion of power and empire and success. Canada and the United States have their differences, but we share this common heritage. The imperial instinct is always to control the lives and societies of the colonized. Christianity has tried to do the same thing."

Canadian churches possess a distinct advantage, according to McLaren. They are better prepared to go postcolonial. "In the United States, Christianity is automatically associated with certain political positions," he suggests. "To be Christian is to be pro-war, anti-environment, anti-poor, pro-Republican, anti-gay, pro-big business, anti-government and so on. Here in Canada, it seems to me, you have less vicious partisanship going on; you should have an easier time getting liberals and conservatives together. If you can debunk the myths and stereotypes associated with the name Christian and awaken the curiosity about Jesus which is always latent, then that's a recipe for hope."

Broader theology is the real thrust of McLaren's contribution to the emerging church. In his latest book, *The Secret Message of Jesus: Uncovering the Truth that Could Change Everything*, McLaren focuses on the idea that the Kingdom of God is at hand.

"The whole notion that heaven is the proper home for Christians has been disastrous for the church," says McLaren. "The kingdom of God is not simply spiritual; it's not about getting souls into heaven. That is not a biblical idea. And yet, some people put all the emphasis on our spiritual evacuation to a better place in the after-life—as if that's all we're waiting for. But that's not what Jesus teaches. The truth is incarnation. The truth is God among us, here and now. The kingdom of God is at hand; it's everyday."



Having separate spheres for the sacred and the secular is rampant in every part of the church, according to McLaren. Recognizing the kingdom of God breaking into the world can lead to radical new commitment in every aspect of life. McLaren argues that it reinvigorates the church's mission, bringing together the arts, social justice, ecology and evangelism. It also stimulates a return to a theology of creation by means of which Christians can recommit to what is local and physical—caring for the earth, opening up to their neighbourhoods, leaving the Christian ghetto.

"The kingdom of God is a revolutionary, counter-cultural movement—proclaiming a ceaseless rebellion against the tyrannical trinity of money, sex and power. Its citizens resist the occupation of this invisible Caesar through spiritual practice," writes McLaren in *The Secret Message of Jesus*. He goes on to identify three kinds of disciplined action. First, generosity towards the poor; second, prayer that focuses on relinquishing power and pursuing reconciliation; and, finally, various forms of fasting that help us to mortify the appetites urged on by our consumer culture.

The kingdom of God is a revolutionary, counter-cultural movement —proclaiming a ceaseless rebellion against the tyrannical trinity of money, sex and power

But McLaren has also come under attack from conservatives for his growing emphasis on politics and activism along with a too-enthusiastic openness to the pluralism and relativism inherent in postmodern culture. Among others, Don Carson, a prominent evangelical New Testament scholar, has called him dangerous saying he distracts people from what lies at the theological core of the Gospel. McLaren is also often accused of being hesitant to affirm without reservation the truth of certain historic Christian ideas and of taking delight in creating chaos out of coherence.

Some find it hard to take McLaren seriously when the subtitle for another book he wrote recently, *A Generous Orthodoxy*, runs on like this: Why I am a missional + evangelical + post/protestant + liberal/conservative + mystical/poetic + biblical + charismatic/contemplative + fundamentalist/calvinist + anabaptist/Anglican + Methodist + catholic + green + incarnational + depressed-yet-hopeful + emergent + unfinished Christian. But McLaren deliberately pokes fun at the labels we use, while daring potential readers to go beyond typecasting and pick up a book by a "mystical green liberal" or an "evangelical biblical fundamentalist." He claims to be both and all of the above—which infuriates a lot of people.

"I love the historic denominations," says McLaren. "I get really unhappy when I hear disrespect voiced towards traditional churches, as if they are passé. But I only rarely encounter that attitude. For the most part, when we hold Emergent gatherings throughout North America, people acknowledge that we need a great diversity of faith communities. There's no one correct way of shaping our life together. Whether it's café churches or mega-churches, Presbyterian cathedrals or spontaneous house churches, art gallery churches or communities that come out of the new monasticism—I'm excited to see so much variety and difference. The Spirit is generating fresh enthusiasm through it all."

Hospitality stands out as one of McLaren's best qualities, says Brian Walsh. Walsh works at the University of Toronto as a Christian Reformed Church campus minister. He teaches at the Toronto School of Theology and is also the author of a number of books which deal with cultural change, including, most recently, a postmodern biblical commentary, entitled



Camping for Christ at Nidus 2006

Colossians Remixed: Subverting the Empire.

"It's refreshing that McLaren makes his contributions as an unlicensed practitioner," notes Walsh. "He's not trained as a theologian, which may help explain his wide appeal. He's open to a lot of unexpected stuff. He welcomes in a whole range of people and positions. There's a real authenticity to his genre, the way he writes and talks. He's trying to relate to the world in which he lives. You can see this in the conversational style he adopts in many of his books."

In the book for which he is best known, *A New Kind of Christian: A Tale of Two Friends on a Spiritual Journey*, McLaren uses a conversation between a burned-out pastor and a high school teacher to explore the problems that arise from the church's captivity to modern culture and then outlines how some postmodern ways can help Christians. The entire book, which became a trilogy, is written as a relaxed dialogue between two friends. The informality of both Brian McLaren and Emergent intersect nicely with the emerging culture.

I know someone who would agree. Back to Sue, emerging on her way through downtown Toronto, riding her mountain bike, with an interest in friendship, the environment, God, good music and among plenty of other things various allergic reactions, including a tendency to steer clear of institutions

The kingdom of God is not simply spiritual; it's not about getting souls into heaven. That is not a biblical idea

with rigid hierarchies—let's follow her to church:

Freedomize Toronto meets on Sundays evening in the sanctuary of St. Andrew's, King St. It's an ironic convergence of an emerging church community and the historic building of one of Canada's most storied Presbyterian congregations.

The people gathering are mostly young and white. They are hipsters, to some extent. They reflect an urban economy which favours the technologically adept and culturally sophisticated. They bring it all in with them.

Tim Fennell graduated recently from Ryerson. He now designs websites. He lives in a condo across the street from the Art Gallery of Ontario. He grew up in church, but never felt like he was "really a part of what was going on," until he got involved with Freedomize Toronto.

"A lot of people here never knew church. And then those that do have church in their past are from all over the map: some from more conservative churches, and others from more liberal churches. The focus is really on the Christian calling to share our lives together in a way that I hadn't encountered elsewhere—and that seems to help bring people together. We try to be open about our failures and not legalistic. We talk about personal stuff: relationship problems, sexual issues, addiction to drugs or alcohol—and it gets talked about from the pulpit too. The preachers use normal language, sometimes even what might be considered bad language and, overall, we try to bridge the gap between church and what's real."

Leah Hunter leads worship at Freedomize. As a professional, classically-trained musician who plays the flute, the music attracted her to the church: "The first thing that drew me in to Freedomize was the worship. I loved the atmosphere: the building, the stone, the stained glass, the architecture. There were hymns from a long time ago as well as songs written the previous week by musicians from within the community. The creativity just blew me away. It had never occurred to me before that something like church could be innovative. It seemed to fit me so well and I didn't expect that."

Freedomize started in 2000 as the church-plant vision of a couple of friends, assisted by The Acts 29 Network—"a network of pastors from around the nation [U.S.] and world whose dream is to help qualified leaders called by God plant new churches and replant declining churches."

Cyril Guerette serves as co-pastor of Freedomize while he finishes his doctoral dissertation on Anselm at St. Michael's College, U of T. He and his wife, Maeghan Westdorp, a photographer, share leadership responsibilities as they await the arrival of their first child later this spring.

Guerette explains that Freedomize is Emerging, but not

Emergent. "We have no affiliation with Brian McLaren. We're doing our own thing. Sure, we're a part of all these new churches appearing, but our focus is local. We actively discourage the image that we're a hip church. We're not a purposefully postmodern church—we definitely do not talk about ourselves that way—but we're from that POMO culture and we're meeting a need by communicating the gospel to our people in the cultural forms of this generation."

These cultural forms are not pre-fabricated. Artists at Freedomize make it real and bring the prophetic to bear. Through works of art by a variety of participants, the principle of the priesthood of all believers comes to life. The new vernacular will not be mediated by printing presses, but by a multiplicity of media which magnify and complicate the power of scripture – the message diversified, not standardized.

"An embrace of the arts is integral to the Emergent worship experience," suggests Guerette who is himself a published poet and hip-hop artist with three CDs to his name. "Baby boomers built utilitarian buildings to house their megachurches. Emergent communities seek out space that supports beautiful liturgy. And that liturgy will be diverse. It becomes a worship pastiche created by the whole community in response to God, rather than an exercise in marketing church to your target audience."

The interest in liturgy points to a recovery of tradition. Emergent church leaders often try to draw upon a pre-Reformation history of Christianity that Protestants have neglected. Freedomize takes a cue from the Eastern Orthodox in the use of icons. Catholics help out with spiritual disciplines. Leaders at Freedomize regularly receive guidance from Jesuit spiritual directors at places such as Loyola House near Guelph.

Community is perhaps most non-negotiable at Freedomize. After a surprisingly rigorous eight-week membership course that goes into considerable theological depth, members are required to participate in small group communities that meet weekly. The church strongly promotes membership. In these groups, Freedomize members are encouraged to work out their response to the culture around them.

For example, Emergent churches have been at the forefront of a forceful Christian critique of our urban society's escalating consumerism and the misguided capitalistic assumptions that we may take for granted. "The idea is that our culture is sick with materialism and waste and we need to work out ways to counteract that as we learn to live together in community," says Guerette. "It's a key part of our witness to the transforming power of Jesus Christ."

Two years ago, Freedomize affiliated nominally with the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada for the sake of financial accountability. But the ties are very loose.

"You won't find that people at Freedomize think of themselves as Pentecostal. Another key aspect of the Emergent scene is the way it's post-denominational. We're not as weighed down by Christendom. And we reject a lot of what comes with denominational labels as unhelpful. That's not to say that our independence doesn't come with its own set of challenges."

Blair Bertrand, associate minister at St. Andrew's, Brampton, Ont., studied the Emergent movement while doing graduate work in youth ministries at Princeton.

"Emergent folks don't go to church because their parents did or out of a sense of duty. If they go at all, it's because they want to. Their understanding of community demands a higher level of intimacy. The idea is that if you're going to show up, it had better not be about going through some religious motions."

Bertrand points out that Presbyterians remain focused on the church edifice. Declining churches tend to cling to their buildings for dear life and healthier churches struggle to get out beyond them. For Emergents, however, sanctuary space is secondary; the primary focus of a building is often a coffee shop or an art gallery. When they say the church is not the building, they mean it.

According to Bertrand, "Our mainline paradigm is still the business world where bigger is better: more people, greater resources, additional services. Growing churches usually don't think of planting new churches that are sometimes risky ventures. They want more of the same success for themselves. Are we willing to let go of central control to allow local bodies, groups, individuals try new things—and not just giving them permission, but having the institution actively support them?"

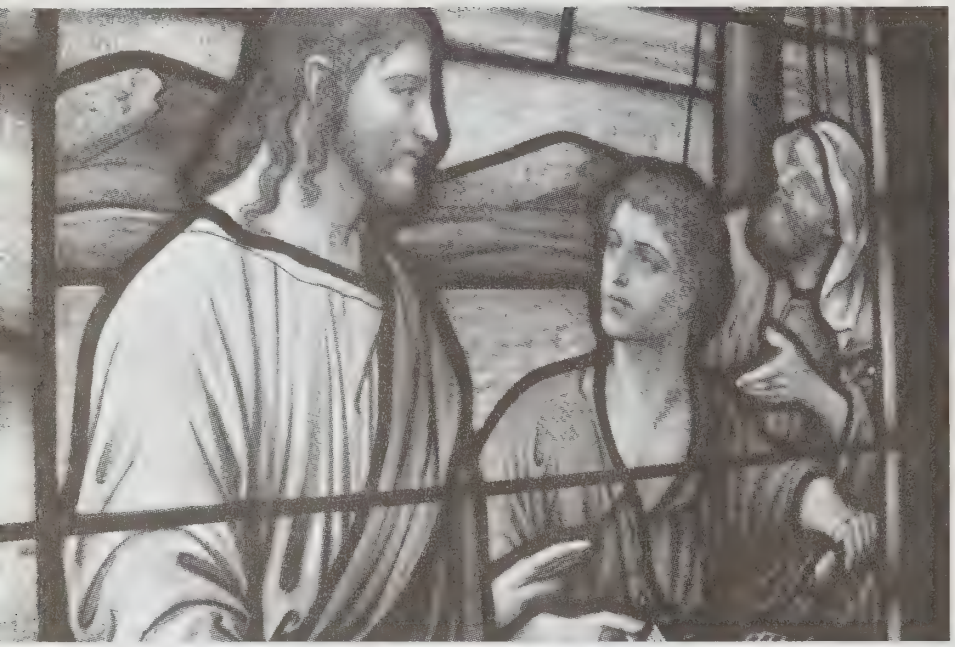
"Emergent folks don't go to church because their parents did or out of a sense of duty. If they go at all, it's because they want to"

Critics of the Emerging Church movement have panned its homogeneity. Brian Walsh views it as primarily a white, middle to upper-class phenomenon. "Emergent for what?" He also asks. "Does Emergent have any wider implications? Will it stimulate any commitment to our global mission?" Others dismiss Emergent as "cool church" for young people exclusively.

There may be a gap between historic denominations and the churches of the Emergent movement, but many recognize the need for a closer relationship. The Freedomize gathering in the building of St. Andrew's, King St., serves as a powerful symbol of that disconnect—and of the potential for more practical unity.

Perched atop her mountain bike, my friend Sue says it best: "I often wonder when I'm worshipping on Sunday nights what happens in the morning at St. Andrew's and then I think how amazing it would be if we could be together. It seems sad, maybe even wrong, that we're not. I'm not sure how that could happen."

Rev. Alex MacLeod is assistant minister for university and young adult ministries at Knox, Spadina, Toronto.



Speaking in Other Tongues

What language(s) did Christ speak? BY BARRY BALDWIN

It is normally thought, certainly was by Mel Gibson, that Christ spoke Aramaic, the Semitic tongue believed to have displaced Hebrew as the Jewish vernacular. Latin is usually ruled out. It was used in the East mainly for administrative purposes; the Romans never forced it on their subjects—hence the bad grammar joke in *Monty Python's Life of Brian*.

The King James Authorised Version misleads when (in Acts) it refers to Jupiter, Mercury, and Diana: the Greek naturally has Zeus, Hermes, and Artemis. Yet, Jesus and Pilate converse easily in John 18. Had Pilate acquired Aramaic? Or Christ some Latin? Or was Greek the East's common tongue (*Koine*)?

Those who deny Greek to Jesus usually adduce the historian Josephus' (*Jewish Antiquities*) difficulties with that language. Augustine (*Confessions*) had similar problems. Still, their troubles prove nothing about Jesus. I don't say he preached regularly in Greek. But he might have varied according to audience. One certainly wonders what tongue he used with the Hellenic woman whom he (Mark 7) healed.

Hebrew presents big, unacknowledged problems. When Jesus appeals to Old Testament texts, he might mean the Targums, i.e. Aramaic paraphrases or translations. John (5, 19) thrice gives definitions of place names "in the Hebrew tongue." Moderns (e.g. the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*; G. Moulton's *Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament*) assert that Hebrew here means Aramaic.

Does their dictum also apply to Acts 22 where God speaks to Saul on the Road to Damascus and Paul preaches at Jerusalem, both occasions "in Hebrew?" When God tells Saul (Acts 26), "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks," he is borrowing a verse from Euripides (*Bacchae* 795).

These same moderns say the only foreign words put on Jesus' lips in the Greek New Testament are Aramaic, instancing Mark 5, 7, 14, 15). We should note these all come at dramatic moments: the raising of Jairus' daughter; healing a deaf mute; Christ's appeal to God as 'Abba' beseeching "Take away this cup from me;" his dying "Eloi, Eloi, Lama Sabachththani." However, John Allegro, a distinguished multi-linguist observes that Abba is not uniquely Aramaic.

Not forgetting, of course, that Christ's cry is a quotation from the opening of Psalm 22. Many will think a dying man's last words are likely to be in his native tongue or (not always the same thing) the language he most used. Furthermore, Matthew 27 and Mark 16 (Luke and John give different last words) say some of the crowd misunderstood his cry, thinking he was "calling upon Eli." Were these ordinary Jews who did not understand Hebrew? Or foreigners ignorant of Aramaic? Or the Roman soldiers on duty who may only have known Latin?

Which brings us to Pilate's famous INRI superscription upon the Cross (Luke 24:28; John 19:19; no such detail in Matthew or Mark), said to have been written "in Greek, Latin and Hebrew" (Luke) and "in Hebrew and Greek and Latin"(John). Their different orderings deserve notice, especially given modern praise of Luke for his particular sensitivity to language differences.

This topic (Biblically writ large from Babel to the Gift of Tongues) recurs throughout Acts: Peter and John ridiculed as "unlearned" (4:13); Barnabas, a Cypriot Jew, was surely bi-lingual (4:36); polyglot disputes with Stephen (6:9); Philip the Deacon translates Isaiah for an Ethiopian official (8:27-32); some apostles preach only to Jews, others only to Greeks (11:19-21); Jews and Greeks simultaneously addressed at Iconium (14:6). Furthermore, what language did Peter communicate in at Rome? Beyond its Jewish community, no resident would know Aramaic or Hebrew; educated Romans knew Greek, ordinary ones only Latin.

Barry Baldwin is Emeritus Professor of Classics at the University of Calgary and a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada.

PWSDevelopments
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Spring 2007

Small Business: Big Hope

The awarding of the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize to the Grameen Bank recognized the important role that saving and loan programs play in giving the world's poorest people the tools to fight poverty themselves. An innovative bank, Grameen has made small loans to almost 7 million people in Bangladesh, one of the world's poorest countries. Helping people earn an income that allows them to live a life with dignity has long been a part of Presbyterian World Service & Development's community development work. This issue of PWSDevelopments looks at how our partners are helping people to use their skills and abilities to transform their communities and break free from cycles of poverty.





The Butcher, The Baker, The Candlestick Maker: Ezewenileni Hospital's AIDS program in northern Malawi is helping home-based care volunteers start income generating projects–like rearing chickens–to raise money to support families affected by HIV and AIDS. The Fraternidad of Mayan Presbyterians is helping Mayan women in Guatemala develop income generating projects–like selling prepared fruit in the market–to better support their families. The Institute for Development Education is helping women in Nepal make and sell candles with skills training and microcredit.



Villages transformed

How the leap from literacy to bank books is making lasting change in India

by [illegible] PWS&D

Jayalakshmi, one of IFDE's community field workers, is working with 148 self-help groups in 31 communities. This dynamic leader began as a member of one of IFDE's women's associations and used small loans to develop a successful milling business with her husband. photos: Brian Atkinson, PWS&D

Over a hundred women sit in the shade in Murugan Nagar, a small village just outside Chennai, India. Each woman is a member of a "self-help group" and they have come to share the story of how micro-finance is changing their lives. They sit holding detailed ledgers recording group minutes, savings, loans, repayments, deposits and withdrawals. The amount of detail is incredible – especially considering that these women come from some of the poorest communities in India and many have never been formally educated.

The story behind the self-help groups began over 15 years ago. "I remember when we first began working in the villages," begins Robert Guruswamy, retired Executive Director of PWS&D partner the Institute for Development Education (IFDE). "It was a time when women were not supposed to go outside alone–a husband or son always had to accompany them." At the time the women lived in inadequate housing, without water, electricity, sewage or any of the basic necessities for life–in quiet acceptance of their life.



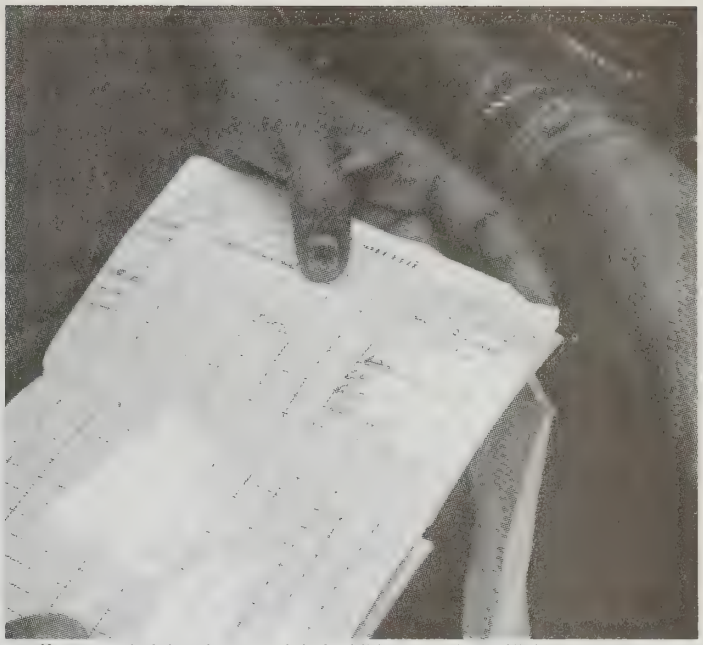
A functional literacy program in Oni Colony is inspiring women to learn.

One of IFDE's first tasks was to bring women together to talk about their struggles and identify ways they might make life better. One of the first priorities they identified was learning to read and write. So IFDE helped establish functional literacy programs which used practical applications to teach them to read and write. Soon they were able to sign their names and read bus numbers and scales in the market and they began to believe in their ability to enable change.

That confidence translated into action as the women formed associations and began to approach their local government, demanding basic services: clean water, sewage, electricity, garbage pick-up. "At first the men resisted them meeting," Robert explains, "but as the women began to accomplish things, they would then ask 'when is the next meeting?'" The women showed themselves to be creative, energetic, and committed.

The idea of microfinance–encouraging savings and providing small loans to people with no credit history and no collateral–began to gain momentum in the mid-nineties and IFDE decided to see if microfinance could help transform the communities where they were working. They found small loans of $100-$350 were enough to develop small busniesses that earned them enough to repay thier loans, improve their homes and send their kids to school.





Left: The women's successes–through both their small businesses and advocacy efforts–are helping them send their children to school. Night tutoring classes run by IFDE build on their achievements by helping the children succeed in school. Right: Women from a self-help group show their bank book.

The loans are provided through 'self-help groups' composed of 12-20 women. The groups hold weekly meetings where they learn business concepts like capital expenditures, savings and how to keep accurate books. Each member contributes 55 rupees a month (about $1.60). R50 is put into a savings account and R5 covers group expenses.

The government has recognized the transformative power of loans and has begun a program to provide loans to the groups through commercial banks. So IFDE's focus shifted from providing loans themselves to helping the groups access the government loans. Once the group has shown they have collectively saved for six months IFDE helps them with the paper work and acts as a type of 'guarantor' for a R25,000 loan from the government. This is divided equally into five R5000 loans for five women in the group who have identified viable business plans. They pay it back with a minimal interest rate. Once it is repaid the group is eligible for a R50,000 loan–split between another 10 women in the group. As they keep paying back loans they can access larger credit–up to a maximum of R125,000. The loans are not much, but they are more than many of these woman would see at one time in their life.

IFDE is now helping over 350 self-help groups access loans from the government. Walking around the communities where IFDE works you will see many businesses that otherwise would not have been there: a tea shop, businesses selling small goods, saris, flowers, fruit and vegetables, tailors sewing clothing.

Devenedran and his wife Nalini transformed their rice paddy using two loans to purchase banana saplings, seeds for greens and radishes. Now they have increased their income from R5,000 to R30,000 per year. Vijiyakumar and his wife began a now bustling tailoring trade in a slum and were soon able to employ another young tailor from the community.

The results are also seen in community life. Houses are being improved and more children are in school. (This is creating a great demand for IFDE night classes which provide after-school help for the students whose parents can't read or write.) Youth are attending IFDE skills training classes in typing, computing, tailoring, embroidery–and they are getting jobs they never would have qualified for.

Women in rural villages and urban slums are transforming their communities in India with a blend of microfinance, education, skills training and advocacy efforts.

One of the major challenges has been to engage young men ages 18-30 in community development. Many of the young men, inspired by what their mothers have accomplished, have begun to work together with IFDE's help to address social issues and advocate on common issues. This year some of the young men have begun their own self-help groups and will soon be eligible to access government loans.

The result is that people who were living in extreme poverty–with barely enough food to sustain life–are building lives with dignity. Key to the success is that microfinance programs have been part of an integrated community development program that builds people up on all levels. And as individuals have achieved success, they are remaining in their communities to help build a better future for all.

IFDE's development work is part of a PWS&D program that is funded in partnership with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

To catch a fish

Presbyterian World Service & Development is supporting partners around the world who are helping people earn an income that lifts them out of poverty and members are [illegible]

Fresh Fish for Sale: *Arumugum casts one of the nets provided by the Institute for Development Education to families in southern India. Before, they caught fish by hand and earned $1.20 a day. Now they can earn $6 to $30 a day - depending on the size, type and number of fish they catch.* ***Milking Future:*** *Lakshmi is one member of a five family dairy unit which was established with the support of the Church's Auxiliary for Social Action as part of the tsunami rehabilitation work in India. She used to earn $1.40-$2.00 a day doing daily labour in the fishing village - but she had many days when she couldn't find work. Now she earns $3 a day for steady work that gives her a sense of dignity.*

photo: Richard Librock, COCAMO





A Cut Above: *Grecia Augusto, a widow with three children, built her house with small loans obtained through the Caixa - a savings and credit union in Nampula, Mozambique for low-income women established with PWS&D's support through Cooperation Canada Mozambique (COCAMO). Small loans helped her set up a hairstyling salon and install a pop-vending machine in the house to help earn an income. The Caixa has been so successful helping women establish small businesses in Nampula that COCAMO is now working to replicate the model across northern Mozambique. Grecia is pictured with Caixa loan officers Esperanza and Costas.*



photo: Brian Atkinson, PWS&D

A Growing Business: Devendran and his wife Nalini used a loan obtained from IFDE to transform a rice paddy in India into a garden overflowing with greens, radishes, bananas and other fruit. They are now making almost $1000/year from land which previously earned them only $150/year.

Milling a Profit: Jayalakshmi and her husband Devaraj used two loans to develop a business milling timber for beds, doors, windows and other items. The loans helped start a thriving business which now employs 10 workers. Jayalakshmi now works for IFDE, helping others grow their businesses.





photo: Karen Plater, PWS&D



Goats of hope: The Church of North India is helping communities start income generating projects as part of their AIDS prevention work. In Yabarni Village, a group of women used loans to obtain goats which earn an income and provide milk and meat for the family. Helping people earn an income locally can prevent migration for lengthy periods of work in the cotton fields or other industries in the neighbouring state of Gujarat - something that increases vulnerability to HIV. **The Threads of Success:** The Fraternidad of Mayan Presbyterials is helping Mayan women in Guatemala improve their weaving and tailoring skills to earn greater value for their hand crafted products.

The Life of a Working Child

By Karen Plater, PWS&D



Magala makes bricks from midnight to 5am and from 11am to 1pm, earning 25 rupees ($.70) a day. From 2pm to 5pm she attends IFDE's center where she receives a hot meal and develops her reading, writing and math skills. photos: Brian Atkinson

PWS&D partner the Institute for Development Education has been helping rural villages and urban slums in India combat poverty, stigma and discrimination that have plagued them for years. One of their latest initiatives has been to open four "victim of child labour" (VCL) centers in response to a need identified by the communities to help working children get an education. This complements IFDE's tuition programs which help young children go to, and stay in, school.

PWS&D partner IFDE is helping working youth get an education while working against the causes that make children leave school and go to work too young.

The centers are for children 15 or older who have been pulled out of school to go to work. (Young people, at 15, are legally allowed to work in India. For children under 15 IFDE helps them get out of work and into regular school.) All of the students so far are girls–because they are more likely to be pulled out of school and are even more vulnerable to poverty and exploitation without an education than men.

The work is varied and diverse. Angela does embroidery, while Nandani is a vegetable vender. Amul and Vijilakshmi work shifts in an export garment factory. Amala, Silvie and Magala work in the brick chambers. Silvie does housekeeping and sells fish. Thamory washes and irons clothes. Behind each girl is an unique story, but they also share the common reality that without an education they are more vulnerable to exploitation, discrimination and raising their children in poverty.

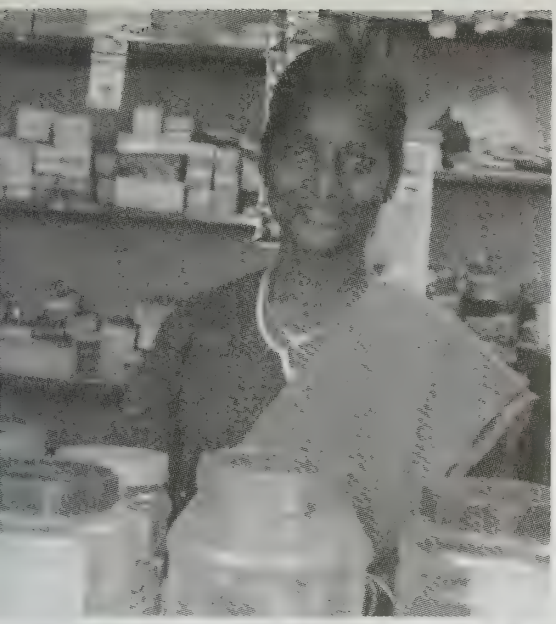
The Maquila Solidarity Network (MSN)–a partner of PWS&D working for fair working conditions and living wages for people around the world–has found that child labour is often directly linked to the low wages paid to adult workers, restrictions on the right to organize and the lack of affordable child care. Working parents are forced to send their underage children to work because they need the income to support the family. Children and young people are less likely to complain about working conditions that may be unjust or illegal–which makes them all the more vulnerable to exploitation.

MSN advises that while abolishing child labour is the long-term goal, "we have to be careful about taking actions that might make life worse for child labourers and their families. Without educational opportunities and transitional support, dismissed child labourers may end up working in more dangerous jobs or in unregulated underground garment factories." IFDE's VCL centers are about providing support for working children, while at the same time working against child labour.

The current students in the centers all demonstrated an eagerness to study and a dedication and commitment to study while working. By limiting the number of students at each center to 10, IFDE helps give them the individual attention and support they need. Over two years, IFDE has found that some of the children who do well in studies will give up work and join a regular school. Others will join IFDE's other skill training programs.

PWS&D helps provide the students with school bags, notebooks, reading material, pencils, erasers and dictionaries - English to Tamil & Tamil to English. In addition the schools help provide recreational opportunities–cricket, tennis, skipping–and field trips to places of educational interest.

At the same time, IFDE continues their commitment to helping children stay in or return to school. Both IFDE's income generation programs–and the solidarity achieved through their women's associations–are helping families keep their children in school (see pages 26 -27).



Indra (16) works at a "fancy store"–a small stall selling stationary, pens, bracelets, sweets and other small goods. She works for two hours each morning and one hour each evening and earns 20 rupees a day–about $.60. She studied to grade five–and is now continuing her education at one of IFDE's VCL centers. Indra gives all she earns to support her mom and sister. She is glad to be able to continue her studies while she supports her family.





Jayalakshmi (18) works with three other students from her center in an "export garment factory." The "factory" is a small cement house with two rooms: one equipped with three sewing machines and the other used for cutting, folding and sorting fabric. They work 8 to 10 am, then go to school and do another shift from 3 to 6 pm. Jayalakshmi's mother is not working and the 30 rupees (under $1) a day she earns helps support her family. She had completed grade six and is glad to be able to continue learning.

A Living Wage

The Maquila Solidarity Network has found that most working parents are forced to send their underage children to work in order to meet their family's basic needs. They simply cannot afford to send them to school. If adults had decent wages and working conditions and reasonable hours of work they could give their children the opportunity to go to school. PWS&D supports ***The Maquila Solidarity Network*** as they work against exploitation and for a living wage.

PWS&D's grant to ***TransFair Canada*** promotes fair trade as a way to improve the livelihood of farmers and workers in developing countries. In addition to the popular fair trade coffee, new fair trade products have become available in the last year, including bath products, ice cream, chocolate milk, bananas and soccer balls. Consumer demand has helped to open the doors of supermarkets to these products.

Find out more at www.maquilasolidarity.org and www.transfair.ca

Fruitful Competition

By Alexander Macdonald, PWS&D

Broken corn stalks line the path to Augusta Gomez's small plot of land in the town of Quisulí Arriba in northern Nicaragua. The province of Nueva Segovia's annual dry season runs for seven months every year, during which there is not even a drop of rain. That, compounded with rainfall well below normal in the wet season, makes feeding a family in this largely agricultural area a constant struggle.

PWS&D partner Soynica is helping rural families in Nicaragua increase their ability to grow food on small plots of land to improve diets and incomes.

Augusta remembers when her mother began to work with Soynica–a partner of Presbyterian World Service & Development committed to helping communities in Nicaragua improve nutrition–over seven years ago. She watched over the next five years as her mother, with the support of Soynica and PWS&D, transformed her one and a half acres of land into a kaleidoscope of fruit and vegetables destined for the local market and family dinner table. Not bad, Augusta thought, but she was sure she could do even better with the plot of land right next to her mother's. And so began a bit of friendly competition that helped both families in the end.

Augusta started listening to the Soynica radio show for an hour in the early morning. Each show explained a different technique for growing plants. "The show helped me learn many things," reflects Augusta as she takes a break from the heat of the mid-day sun. For example, like many others in the area, she thought coffee and other plants could not be produced on their land. "I thought coffee needed very wet area on the mountains," she explains. But she followed Soynica's advice and was pleased to see that her land can sustain a wide variety of crops, including coffee.

From the radio show she learned to grind the leaves of Yucca and other plants into an extract containing high levels of iron and vitamin A. This extract has helped reduce the incidence of anemia in the region. Augusta's daughter, Tatiana, drinks the extract mixed with juice each morning. Augusta has seen a marked improvement in Tatiana's grades at school and overall health and energy levels.

Augusta has attended training workshops and visited other small farmers in the area to share ideas. She has collaborated with Soynica's agricultural technicians to diversify her plot of land and increase the overall food security of her family. Her land is now home to flourishing crops including cucumber, carrot, papaya, pineapple, mango, cinnamon and pear. Augusta appreciates the support of PWS&D and is thankful for the partnership that has helped create an oasis in the midst of desolate conditions.



Augusta stands with her daughter, niece and nephew in front of a pea tree on her plot of land. The plastic [illegible] at the bottom protects the tree [illegible] leaf cutter ants.

photo: Alexander Macdonald, PWS&D

It has taken Augusta two years to transform her plot of land, and to see it produce, even in times of drought. She has begun to realize the benefits, not only at the dinner table but also in the income it generates. When asked who's winning the family battle, Augusta smiles and rocks gently in her chair, "Both my mother and I are winning, but she had a five year head start, I'll catch her sooner or later."

Soynica's work in northern Nicaragua is part of a PWS&D/CFGB program that is funded in partnership with the Canadian International Development Agency.

For more information or to make a donation contact:
Presbyterian World Service & Development
50 Wynford Drive Toronto, ON M3C 1J7
tel: 416-441-1111 or 1-800-619-7301
www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd pwsd@presbyterian.ca

This educational resource is produced twice a year by PWS&D with financial support from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

Editor: Karen Plater, PWS&D

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The New Normal



Nearly half of all congregations have a part-time or a multi-vocational minister. BY PETER BUSH

Ask average Presbyterians in Canada what the normal model for ministry is, and they will inevitably describe a self-supporting congregation with its own full-time paid minister. These clergy have one calling, one vocation, to the single congregation they serve.

Over the past year, I have heard of several congregations seeking part-time ministers. I e-mailed the clerks of presbytery across Canada in order to get an accurate count of the number of congregations served by part-time ministers. My question sought out congregations with a solo minister who serves that congregation part-time. I did not ask about the number of part-time youth ministers or pastoral visitors (although that too is an interesting question).

The clerks were very helpful and offered responses that made me realize I was defining "part-time" too narrowly. A number of clerks pointed out, quite accurately, that congregations which are part of two- or three-point charges in fact have part-time clergy. (Interestingly, this insight was more likely to come from clerks who were not ministers of word and sacrament.) Clergy serving more than one congregation have two or more callings, two or more vocations, and thus are bi-vocational.

Using this definition, which I find compelling, 45 per cent (429) of the congregations in The Presbyterian Church in Canada are served by bi-vocational ministers. While it is true many bi-vocational ministers are found in rural and small-town areas of Canada, this model of ministry is not exclusively rural. Large metropolitan areas like Toronto also have bi-vocational ministry. This raises questions about how "normal" the perceived normal model of ministry is.

Two studies in the late 1990s looked at Methodist congregations in the United States, asking, "Which is a more effective form of ministry:

(a) a minister serving three congregations and sharing their time among three communities and three congregations, or

(b) a minister serving one congregation in one community one-third time and doing something else in that same community with the other two-thirds of their work time?"

A conversation about the models of ministry is needed in our church

The studies concluded that the second model was more effective. The most important factor seems to be that a minister who serves three congregations in three communities is not rooted enough in any one community to really understand it and to minister outside of the normal flow of worship preparation, worship leading, preaching, and pastoral care within the three congregations. The minister who serves a church in the community one-third of the time and works at something else in the community the rest of their work time knows the community well enough to understand it and is present enough to reach out with the gospel. A further factor in the second model is a tendency towards longer-term pastorates, since the person's roots in one community are deeper and the work-life balance is more sustainable. In conversations with clergy who have served or who presently serve multi-point charges, the second approach is favoured.

At present, our Presbyterian polity is unclear about bi-vocational ministry. For example, John serves a congregation and also has a job outside the church, (which accounts for more than 50 per cent of his work). He cannot be called to the congregation and does not have a vote at presbytery. Yet Joanne is called to serve three congregations (none of which on its own accounts for 50 per cent of her work) and she can vote at presbytery. Both are multi-vocational clergy, but they are treated in different ways by the denominational system.

A substantive conversation about the models of ministry within The Presbyterian Church in Canada is needed. This conversation will have to develop a vocabulary that recognizes multi-vocational ministry among the normal models of ministry, since 45 per cent of the Presbyterian congregations in the country are served by multi-vocational ministers.

Rev. Peter Bush is a teaching elder at Knox, Mitchell, Ont. He recently co-authored Where 20 or 30 are Gathered: Leading Worship in the Small Church *with Christine O'Reilly. This is the third of a series.*



Divorce Happens in the Church

Those suffering need a place to share their pain.

BY VICKI HOMES

How can I help make a change for the better as an ordained minister of the church? How can my past experience help others find peace with God, with themselves and within their church family? How can I help others on their journey?

I would have never imagined that my divorce would end up a gift in my life and in my work as a minister. From personal experience I will say without hesitation that divorce is tough. It is hard for the parents, for the children, for extended family and for the church.

So the question for me has become, How can we help? How can we, the church, respond to this growing need for pastoral care in our churches and in our communities?

First we must begin to educate ourselves. We must listen carefully to the stories and hear the pain. Those who have been through this will tell you that lawyers can help, counsellors can help, friends can help—but that is not enough. They need to find peace with God and with their church. They need to know they are not the only ones.

Those who have been divorced often feel alienated by the church. Nobody wants to talk about it. It is just a lot easier to go to worship on Sunday for an hour and then go home. But the fact is, divorce does impact our church family. It does affect the elder who is caring for the family. It does affect the children in church school and most importantly it raises faith questions. These are some that I have heard:

Why me? When I got married, wasn't it forever? Am I being punished? Will God judge me if I remarry? Have I let God down? Will they hire me if they find out I'm divorced? That was a big one for me.

And there are more stories. There are clergy families that have been broken—spouses are left with no support and feeling abandoned by the church. Clergy who find themselves in the midst of divorce often feel alienated by their peers.

For the church to help and to rebuild, it must listen. The church must provide a safe environment where people can talk and share their pain. Those who are going through divorce will tell you that the greatest comfort is being able to talk about it openly and honestly with others who have gone through it.

Can we provide that forum in the church? Should we? My answer, of course, is "yes." 1 Corinthians 13:26 reminds us, "If one part suffers, every part suffers with it. If one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it." I would suggest that we are already good at rejoicing.

Remember, divorce has no socio-economic barriers, no gender bias, no race or religious preference. It can happen in your family. It can happen to one of your children.

My hopes and dreams as a minister are to continue to hold the pastoral needs of those who are separated and divorced as a high priority in my work. Alongside of this work I am also actively pursuing ways that we as a church can provide good pastoral care and preparation to couples before they get married.

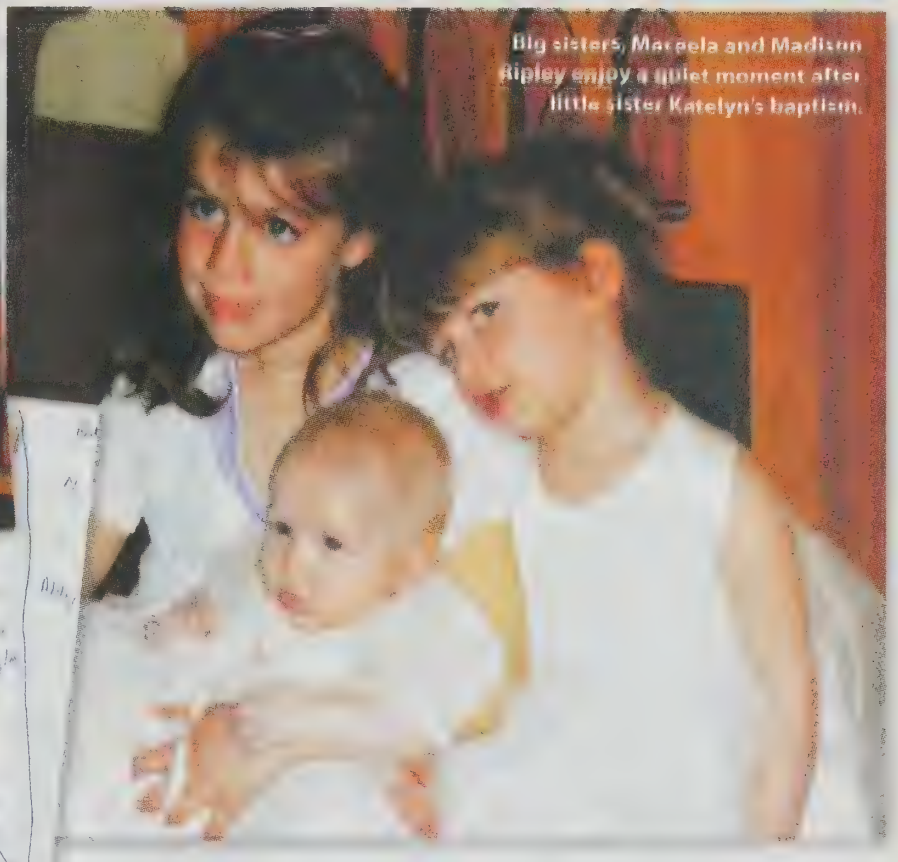
I don't propose or even suggest that I have all the answers. But what I do have is first-hand experience and knowledge. And when I see shock in church families because John and Joan separated and hear comments like "they were the pillars of the church," "he was an elder," "she was active in the Atlantic Mission Society," "how could it happen to them," I know we have a way to go.

Divorce does happen in the church. We must respond with God's love and care.

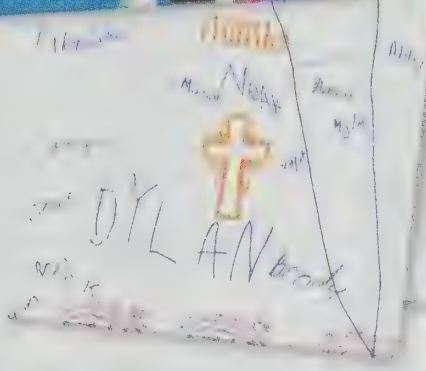
Rev. Vicki Homes is a minister in Prince Edward Island. This is the last of a series.



Rev. Lara Scholey and her growing congregation



Big sisters, Macaela and Madison Ripley enjoy a quiet moment after little sister Katelyn's baptism.



There are Children Here

A dream has come true through grace, planned giving and hard work. BY LARA SCHOLEY

God certainly is a surprise. It began with a dream by an elder long, long ago to one day have a Christian educator work in the congregation. The dream was mentioned now and then, but in a medium-sized rural church of 300 members (100 attending on Sunday), many thought it was unrealistic. Then, in the last six years, this village of 500 outside of Pictou experienced a baby boom. There were more and more babies around, including twins and triplets, with quite a few young families coming to church.

In May 2006, we celebrated at Bethel, Scotsburn, Nova Scotia. Children were singing, people were smiling, stories were told and gifts were shared as we celebrated Christian education. The sanctuary was decorated with balloons, the sacrament of baptism took place, and a university student reflected on her years growing up at Bethel. The youth group, CGIT/Explorers, and Sunday school presented money they had raised. A new children's choir sang *God Is A Surprise*.

This congregation has always been mission-minded. Whether it is the choir singing at the nursing home on a Sunday afternoon, Atlantic Mission Society groups, a commitment to Presbyterians Sharing, food donations to the local food bank, grants for attending church camps or lay education, or giving to the urgent needs of PWS&D, their generosity challenges and encourages me. We try to pass on that enthusiasm and commitment of mission to our younger families, but find that it is hard to communicate. Many adherents, loosely connected to the church, are visited by elders, receive newsletters, and help in fundraising events. The contribution they make through time and donations keeps them connected to the church family.

During the capital drive we wrote letters to members, adherents and friends of the church who lived elsewhere

We knew that we could not employ someone from our general budget, so the Christian Education Permanent Fund was born ▶

in December 2004. Through this fund, we were able to build up resources, invest money and use the interest to employ a Christian educator. We wished to be proactive and have a fund for people to contribute to other than the General Fund.

After a long process in the fall of 2005, the Presbytery of Pictou decided it could no longer fund the presbytery worker, and the position was ended. Instead of gaining resources when we were gaining young children, we were losing them. It was time to act!

During the capital drive for the Christian Education Permanent Fund, we wrote letters to members, adherents and friends of Bethel who lived elsewhere. We asked people to speak during worship for a few minutes about what Christian education meant to them. We heard from children, youth, the elderly, leaders and followers, men and women, parents, grandparents—all who had a passion for education in the church. Of course, the best reason to support the CE fund was found

The Sunday school presented the money it had raised and the children sang

in the little children sitting around us, and they were not to be silenced! This year, we are expanding the program to include the teachers' professional development days when children are not in school.

Sometimes, with big dreams, you put the cart before the horse. We began the journey without knowing the ins and outs of funds, capital drives and investing. The Stewards by Design conference gave our leaders the confidence to pursue this dream and build our strengths. Through the Planned Giving Network, we have been given advice on investing, setting up funds, and how to receive gifts of all kinds. People who are no longer members of the congregation, but still

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connected, have lent a hand in areas where we needed help.

The "boom babies" are growing up. This year, the three-year-olds and the Primary/Grade Ones are the biggest Sunday school classes at Bethel. By next summer, we hope to have an influx of four-year-olds to Community Bible School, held in the local elementary school. A few new families have begun attending church and the after-school program. Word

Instead of gaining resources when we were gaining young children we were losing them. It was time to act

has spread that there are children here. Our challenge is to keep reaching out to the community and to provide a viable ministry as children grow into their teens.

Our long-term goal for the fund is $250,000 so that interest from the fund can be used year after year. (We currently have approximately $100,000.) Our hope in 2007 is to employ a minister of Christian education for one day a week, with help from a grant. Who knows what dreams of ministry can be accomplished by grace? God is so good as we celebrate and dream!

Rev. Lara Scholey is the minister of Bethel Church and mother of Matthew, Isaac and Charlotte Adams.

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Community, Conflict and Coming Together

The Presbytery of Hamilton is devoted to reaching out. BY AMY MACLACHLAN

Last month, readers got to know the Presbytery of Hamilton with its commitment to youth ministry and vibrant, revamped worship. The challenges of being one of the church's largest presbyteries were also highlighted, with ministers noting that strong leadership, cooperation and building relationships with each other were hard-to-realize but important priorities. The presbytery's story continues in this issue.

St. Paul's, Hamilton, (est. 1830s) boasts a heritage building designated by the federal and provincial governments. Located in the heart of downtown Hamilton, St. Paul's serves an eclectic group of worshippers spanning a wide age range and cultural background. Issues of history are important to the congregation, which is proud of its 2,800-pipe Casavant organ installed in 1911, its 100-year-old chimes and 35 years of service from resident chimer Walter Plater (the celebration service and chime recital attracted local and national politicians, historians, architects, and representatives from the national church), and the 1921 Scottish-made Celtic cross memorial commemorating fallen soldiers from the two great wars.

But the congregation doesn't look only to the past. It serves in the present, which to downtown St. Paul's often means ministering to street people who come to the church looking for help. The church hosts a weekly friendship centre, where vulnerable people in the community can spend a morning of socializing and enjoy a light lunch. It also supports Cottage Studio, an art program that promotes mental health and the artistic talents of people recovering from mental illness.

"One of our biggest challenges now and in the future will be to communicate to the general public, who have become complacent about the Christian way of life, that we are a viable and welcoming church," said Rev. James Dickey. "At St. Paul's, we honour the past without being entombed in it."

Coming Together

Successful amalgamation of congregations is not an everyday occurrence—and not an easy task. While an attempted amalgamation at Aldershot, Burlington, failed to come to fruition (the congregation is considering selling the building and shifting its ministry focus), two others in the presbytery are enjoying the benefits of their new partnerships. Kirkwall and Knox, Sheffield, two historic country churches located just outside Cambridge, were so close to each other that it made sense to pool their resources during a time when growth was stalling and both human and financial resources were increasingly stressed.

"Amalgamation brings to the new Kirkwall much more than an increase in membership and better stewardship of resources," said interim minister Rev. Heather Vais. "It also enables the congregation to develop outreach and mission."

The newly formed congregation has a passion for mission with the Corn Share program through Canadian Foodgrains Bank, and people are excited about other mission goals they can now pursue together.

Vais also oversaw the January 1st amalgamation of Pineland and Strathcona churches in Burlington, renaming themselves Burlington East Presbyterian Church. "Once again the members of the congregation realized that two churches located so close to one another could serve God better together than apart," said Vais. "They're excited about their instantly expanded family and are working well together in planning ministry."



Six Nations protestors stand at the barricade in Caledonia, Ont., near Hamilton last May.

In the News

The land dispute conflict between the Ontario government and First Nations in Caledonia has put the entire community under stress. In February 2006, demonstrators from the Six Nations Reserve began occupying a 60-hectare tract of land that was slated for development. During the spring and summer months, violence broke out between Caledonia residents and demonstrators.

But during this time of trial, Caledonia Presbyterian Church built relationships with the community and its First Nations neighbours—something the national church is trying to encourage with the launch of its Walking Together program.

"Throughout this time of anxiety and uncertainty, Caledonia Church and other local churches have continued to pray for peace and a resolution to the dispute," said Rev. Tom Vais. "Every Wednesday morning, ministers from the churches in Caledonia and some ministers from the Six Nations Reserve gather to have a time of fellowship and prayer."

Church members have also prepared food for the hundreds of police officers who work seemingly endless shifts, have helped organize special events for the children and families living in homes that are close to the disputed land, and some were part of a community group that rented the local pool and offered an afternoon of free swimming and doughnuts to children in the community.

"Caledonia Church has always been a church for the community," said Vais. For the past five years in December, the congregation holds a non-denominational service for families who have recently lost a loved one. "This candlelight memorial service gives grieving families a sense of hope and comfort when the Christmas season can be such a difficult time for them."

The list of outreach and mission projects goes on and on. Other great things happening in the presbytery include:

- Aldershot, Burlington, supports local charities such as the Partnership West Food Bank and the Compassion Society of Burlington, a clothing bank that opens at Aldershot once a week. There are numerous groups to join that focus on fellowship, social time, healing, discipleship and ministry. Groups always leave an empty chair during their meetings and pray that God will one day fill the chair.

- Knox, Burlington, has a music event team, a junior choir, teen praise band and senior choir; the WMS group sells fair-trade coffee, tea and chocolate after worship each Sunday; the congregation also supports CFGB, and runs a food bank in the church. ▶

- St. Paul's, Burlington, has a website featuring video clips, blog entries, announcements, book reviews, event listings, thank-yous, and broadcast times for local Christian radio shows.

- Since June 2005 at Erskine, Hamilton, three members of the Alpha team have spent Wednesday evenings in the Hamilton Wentworth Detention Centre. Gibson, the centre's first volunteer dog guide, is the fourth team member. The evening begins with a DVD presentation followed by discussion. "Our team is dedicated to the prison ministry," said Rev. Ian McPhee. "In 2006, they only missed two nights. The support and prayers of the Erskine congregation go with them each week. The inmates wear orange uniforms. A member of the team once remarked, 'We all wear orange, just some of us wear it on the inside.'"

- At Alberton Church, where the 161-year-old worshipping community has never had a full-time minister of its own, meaningful outreach continues. Every Sunday, two women greet people with a welcome hug as they walk through the door for worship. Following worship, up to one-third of the congregation stays behind for Bible study and discussion. Its 86 members support CFGB and local charities as well as ecumenical programs with the Canadian Bible Society and Leprosy Mission. In 2006, the congregation forwarded to PWS&D the second-largest sum of any congregation in the presbytery, with nearly $5,000 given. The congregation is a staunch supporter of the *Presbyterian Record* and *Glad Tidings*, which minister John Johnston said are "integral to the mission awareness program of Alberton."

- Established in 1905, Chalmers, Hamilton, sponsors and accommodates Boy Scouts and Girl Guide groups—a relationship that has lasted more than 80 years. Chalmers also supports local charities such as Wesley Urban Ministries, Neighbour-to-Neighbour, City Kidz and local women's shelters. This year's Sunday school focus is Malawi and the kids will be hosting a spaghetti supper to raise money for a project in that country. The annual bazaar, held in October, has been going strong for more than 50 years. The congregation prides itself on maintaining a traditional church bazaar feel. Most of the items sold are handmade or home-baked, including jams and jellies, cookies and cakes, knitted baby blankets and booties, and quilts that are made by the church women and donated to be raffled off. Nearly $4,000 is raised each year, and the funds are traditionally used for budgetary needs.

- Trinity, Hamilton, is the product of an amalgamation of Eastmount and St. Enoch's back in 2005. The congregation meets at the old Eastmount building, and is currently working with local architects to renovate the church. Trinity has various teams that contribute to the life and leadership of the church including teams for caring ministries, mission, welcoming and special events. The Sunday school offers a computer lab, and church members donate various items—clothing, food, eyeglasses, books, stamps and Canadian Tire money—to numerous charities.

- A partnership between St. Cuthbert's, Hamilton, and a church in Uganda has been going strong for several years. Six people have travelled to Uganda to visit their African partners, and the congregations are striving to make it a two-way learning experience. Music ministry is an integral part of worship. "We defy the categories of traditional and contemporary," said Rev. Cathy Stewart-Kroeker, who admitted she doesn't care for such labels. "We do everything!" The congregation has resisted the trend towards technology—there are no giant screens, projectors or Power Point presentations. "It seems like a quick fix to challenges that are much deeper and more interesting." The congregation is also figuring out how to support members in their daily jobs—which many feel is their own personal ministry. "How are we compatible with or stand in tension to that?" asks Stewart-Kroeker. "I think people come to church on Sunday to be strengthened for what they do from Monday to Friday. People pour themselves into what they are already doing."

Rev. Judee Archer Green, a part of the presbytery since her ordination in 1977 and now presbytery clerk, admits that many congregations—just like others across the country—are wrestling with issues such as discerning whether to change or remain the same, reaching out to changing communities, worship considerations, and where the church stands in the 21st century. She praised the current efforts to help congregations and members relate to each other less formally, and to encourage cooperation. "There are congregations that realize that they need to analyze what they are doing; that what they're doing right now may not be working. Some are there now; others are close.

"Whatever they do, I hope they focus on being the Christian Church, and not a social club. The primary focus should be relating to God and then being faithful in whatever they're doing, in whatever style works for them."

THE PRESBYTERY OF HAMILTON AT A GLANCE

Congregations: **36**
Charges: **32 (Four are two-point)**
Members in 2004: **6,307; Attendance 3,538; Adherents 2,377**
Members in 2005: **6,139; Attendance 3,339; Adherents 2,413**
Vacancies: **8 + 4 with interim minister or stated supply**
Largest by members: **Chedoke, Hamilton (428), Knox, Burlington (418), Central, Hamilton (417)**
Largest by attendance: **Chedoke, Hamilton (325), Knox, Burlington (250), MacNab St, Hamilton (210)**
Largest by adherents: **Knox, Burlington (287), Chedoke, Hamilton (201), Central, Hamilton (184)**

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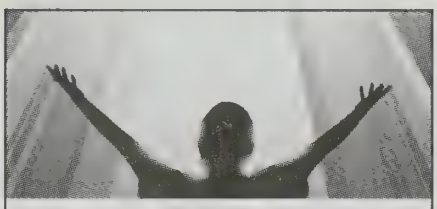
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Fore-giveness

The irritating sport can teach some mighty lessons. BY PHIL CALLAWAY

Golf is an irritating little sport that beckons us with promises of hope then dashes them in the sand or the creek. It's something my son and I have been thinking about the last few days and something we celebrate at Easter.

Standing on the first hole with grand visions of the round ahead, Jeffrey pulled out his new driver, carefully placed a brand new ball on a brand new tee, took a few perfect practice swings, then smacked his first shot. Hard.

My friend Lyndon had been enjoying his round until then. He was standing on the second green less than a hundred yards away lining up a long putt thinking pleasant thoughts when he heard two guys yelling "Fore," at roughly the same decibel level as a teenager's stereo.

Later that day, Jeffrey and I showed up at his house with a card and a gift. Lyndon limped to the door and smiled at us as we stood there apologizing for the eleventeenth time.

"No problem," said Lyndon. "I'm a welder. I'm used to incoming objects."

I talked with a former Buddhist once, asking him what he saw in Christ that he never saw in Buddha. He didn't even pause to think about it. "Forgiveness for my sin," he said. It is the promise of God, sealed at Easter.

Recently, I watched another story of forgiveness unfold during the prestigious British Open. Though Ian Woosnam was ranked number one in 1991, has his own jet airplane and a putting green, he had been on a "downhill slide" according to the media. But here he was atop the leader board, tied on the last day of the tournament with four other golfers. At only five foot four inches tall, Woosnam was poised to stand tall on the winner's podium.

After nearly acing a hole, he found himself leading the final round. Bending over to tee his ball up, he turned to caddie Miles Byrne for a club.

Instead, he got the shock of his golfing life.

"We've got two drivers in the bag," Byrne told him.

Woosnam knew immediately what it meant. He had 13 other clubs. With two drivers, that made 15. Only 14 are allowed. Woosnam had to call a two-stroke penalty on himself. A penalty that would knock him out of the lead.

When the day was over, he had fallen four strokes short of the winning score posted by David Duvall and was left wondering what might have been had one of the worst gaffes in major championship history not occurred.

But the response of the two men is the real story. Surely Miles Byrne could find someone or something to blame for his mistake. Instead Byrne said, "You want me to stand here and make excuses? There is no excuse. The buck stops at me. My fault, two-shot penalty, end of story." And what about Woosnam? How loudly would the Welshman yell when he fired Byrne, the caddy that may have cost him his last chance at a major championship?



"With a superhuman show of forgiveness Woosname did not murder Byrne"

The Irish Examiner printed his response: "With a superhuman show of forgiveness Woosnam did not murder Byrne."

"It's the biggest mistake he will make in his life," said Woosnam. "He won't do it again. He's a good caddie. He will have a severe talking to when I get in, but I'm not going to sack him."

As the two walked together down the fairway to the 18th green, the crowd rose to its feet giving them a standing ovation. Failure and remorse. Repentance and forgiveness. I think I've read that story somewhere before.



An Obsession for Restoration

God constantly seeks to reclaim what we deteriorate through sin. BY DAVID WEBBER

"I found someone!" I said.

"Good for you, hon. Who did you find?" Linda didn't even look up from her knitting as she spoke. She had the look of a distracted mother.

"I found someone to restore our old chestnut cedar canvas canoe," I said. "His name is Mike and he lives down south in the Kettle Valley. He is coming up this way in October for a moose hunt and says he can drop in and give us a quote, maybe even take the canoe back with him."

Linda wasn't studying her knitting anymore. Instead, she was carefully studying me over her half-glasses. I noticed her look wasn't very accommodating. Linda is the family financial planner and if she gets the slightest inkling someone is about to stick a straw into the bank account and begin to suck, she gets real interested real fast. "So what kind of money are we talking about?" Linda challenged. She was scowling now.

"Oh I don't know, about a thousand dollars, give or take a few hundred." I whispered the last part. "That's why he is going to give us a quote first."

"You could buy two new canoes for that much, couldn't you?" Linda asked.

"Yeah, I-I-I suppose so. But they just wouldn't be the same," I said quickly. "They would be made out of fiberglass or plastic, not yellow cedar and canvas. And besides, they would be new. Our Chestnut Prospector is a real piece of history. It's the canoe that settled the north."

"Yeah, right," Linda said. "You and restoring old stuff. It's become a real obsession with you."

I knew she was right, but I was still hopeful. Linda didn't share my obsession for "restoring old stuff" but I knew deep down inside that she was powerful fond of that old chestnut canoe. We had shared many wonderful hours paddling and fishing in it. It was leaky and getting pretty rickety now, but I knew Linda didn't want to lose her. I decided to drop the subject and let Linda brood on the idea rather than try to hatch the plan myself. I went down to the spot under the big spruce tree whe-

re we kept the canoe covered with a tarp. I was in a mood to ponder.

I pulled the tarp back and touched the painted canvas on the cedar belly of the old canoe. She had seen better days. She was manufactured in Fredericton more than 60 years ago and was the standard of canoes back then. Now everything is high-tech Kevlar, fiberglass and plastic. The new canoes are almost indestructible. Why would I sooner have this old wooden canoe restored than buy a brand new high-tech one for half the money? Why would I sooner spend huge amounts of time and money restoring a century-old pressed-back rocker than simply go out and buy a brand new leather recliner for half the price and none of the effort? Why would I sooner spend more time and money restoring an old California-made Fender flat-topped guitar than buy a new high-quality instrument built offshore? Why would I sooner lay out twice as much money to get my old leather Redwing hunting boots resoled than buy a brand new pair of Gortex super-boots direct from the shoe capital of the world?

As I stroked the old canoe and pondered this, I realized that there were a lot of reasons for my obsession for restoring old stuff. One is that I am an incorrigible Luddite. I don't like new stuff, especially new technological stuff. Another is, I like stuff made in Canada or at least North America. But more than anything else, the reason I would sooner restore something old than buy something brand new is history. From my perspective, history embeds great affection and value into things, thus making the enormous effort and large cost of restoration well worth it. That's why I have an obsession with restoring old stuff. In an odd sort of way, and I am not sure He would be pleased with the comparison: I guess I am a bit like God.

The Bible makes it clear God has an obsession for restoration. In the very first chapters, God creates humanity in His image. When humankind begins to fall apart and distort due to the weathering of sin, rather than scrap the works and begin again brand new, God starts a great restoration project with the old. After the creation account, the rest of the Bible tells the story of God's restoration project. Even in the Flood, God is restoring through Noah, not resorting to the brand new. The project drives God to set apart a person for himself and to set apart a people for himself in order to try and bring restoration and blessing upon all people. Every time sin weathers his people, God doesn't scrap them but goes about restoring them. Over and over again with his people—through the Exodus, through the Wilderness, through the Conquest, through the Monarchy, through the Exile—God is restoring, not beginning again brand new. The reason? God has a history with His creation and with humanity, a history that has embedded great value that warrants the extra effort and cost of

Every time sin weathers His people, God doesn't scrap them but goes about restoring them

restoration. The extent and effort God is willing to go to in His restoration work is made starkly clear one Friday on a cross. God's ultimate restoration work takes on human flesh in order to take on human sin and nail that sin to death. Why? Because sin is the problem; because sin is what causes the weathering and the decay.

You see, here is the thing. I have a history with God, just like my old chestnut canoe has a history with me. Because of that history, because of the love that that history has embedded in God's heart, I have great value to God. When I survey the wondrous cross, I don't see the weathered and decaying man that I am in my sin. I see the potential. I see the startling effort and extreme cost that God is willing to expend to deal with my sin and restore me to himself and to new life. And I sing out in the words of Jan L'Ecuyer:

Father, I'm convinced of Your love again.

Just when I had forgotten, You spoke my name. Father, I'm convinced of Your purpose,

To restore, to renew, to reclaim.

Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the Record. *He is minister of the Cariboo, B.C. house church ministry. His most recent book is* Like a Winter's Aspen: Embracing the Creator's Fire.

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Weyburn, Knox; Interim Moderator Rev. Tae-Wook (Jonathan) Kwon; PO Box 7, Grenfell, SK S0G 2B0; 306-697-2612; joyktw@hotmail.com.

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Sylvan Lake, Memorial; Interim Moderator Rev. Fiona Wilkinson; 403-556-8894; revfiona@shaw.ca.

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Comox, Comox Valley; Interim Moderator Rev. Elizabeth Forrester, 2408 Glenayr Dr., Nanaimo, BC V9S 3R7; 250-751-1544; eamfor@telus.net.
Sidney, Saanich Peninsula Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. David Stewart, 633 Peacock Ave., Victoria, BC V9E 1B7; 250-478-1363; revdws@telus.net; http://mypage.uniserve.ca/~sppc/index40.html.
Slocan Valley, St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Rev. Gavin Robertson, c/o First Presbyterian Church, 1139 Pine Ave., Trail, BC V1R 4R2; 250-364-0335; firstpc@telus.net.
Sooke, Knox Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Kerry McIntyre, 531 Herbert St., Duncan, BC V9L 1T2; kmcintyre@standrewsduncan.org.
Vancouver, Chinese Presbyterian Church, Associate Minister (English Ministry); Interim Moderator, Rev. Diane Tait-Katerberg, c/o Chinese Presbyterian Church, 6137 Cambie St., Vancouver, BC V5Z 3B2; katerberg@dccnet.com.
Victoria, Chinese (bilingual, English/Cantonese); Rev. H. McNabb, 760 Latoria Rd., Victoria, BC V9C 3A4; hamcnabb@shaw.ca
West Vancouver, West Vancouver Presbyterian Church; Rev. R. C. (Bob) Garvin, 12225 Senda Crt., Mission, BC V4S 1B8; garvins@shaw.ca.

OBITUARIES

COWIE, RUTH PEARL (RAYNER), passed away peacefully and in the loving care of the House of Providence Health Care Centre on February 2, 2007, in her 90th year. Predeceased by husband Karl A. Cowie in 1965 and son George in 2003. Loving mother of Ann and her husband Bill Vale; mother-in-law of Karola. Grandmother of Brent (Sue), Brad (Melody) and Brett (Tonia) Vale; Robert and David Cowie. Great-grandmother of Noah and Lucas Vale; Jasmine, Alex and Rose Cowie; Cassandra Vizzini. Predeceased by brothers the Rev. Dr. DeCourey H. Rayner, Toronto, Ont.; Gordon L. Rayner, Venice, Florida; and Kenneth W. Rayner, London, Ont. She will be sadly missed by her many nieces and nephews.

Former member of St. Andrew's, Wallacetown, Ont.; St. Andrew's, Lachine, Que.; St. Andrew's, Markham, Ont.; St. John's, Cresswell, Ont.; and longtime member of Westview, Toronto, Ont. Ruth worked 19 years as Administrative Assistant in the comptroller's office at The Presbyterian Church in Canada. She was a life member of WMS.

HORN, CLAUDE ARTHUR, faithful member and elder of St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church, St. Stephen, N.B., died on November 12, 2006. He served his church and his God with humour, kindness and grace.

MCLEAN, REV. NEIL J., passed away suddenly on November 4, 2006. A native of Louisbourg, N.S., graduate of Dalhousie University and Knox College, Mr. McLean was ordained to the pastoral ministry in 1951. Rev. Neil served as pastor of the Presbyterian charges of Grand River/Loch Lomond/Framboise, N.S. (1951-63); St. Andrew's Church, Sydney Mines, N.S. (1963-79); and Marion Bridge/Mira Ferry/Catalone/Louisbourg, N.S. (1979-90). After retirement, Rev. Neil served several congregations in Cape Breton. Rev. Neil's sermons were doctrinal, expository and evangelical. He was also a pianist, organist, composer and poet.

Rev. Neil is survived by his wife Dolena, daughters Sharon (Mrs. Gilbert Schmidt) and Rachel (Mrs. Rev. J. Gillis Smith), son Daniel and grandsons Timothy Schmidt, Alexander McLean and Kendall McLean. He was predeceased by his first wife Ruth Cathcart and two infant sons. "But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength..." (Isaiah 40:13)

MCLEISH, JOHN, elder of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont. John was a member of the Administrative Council for six years.

WADLEIGH, MARY, member of Parkwood Presbyterian Church, Ottawa, Ont.; active elder 1989-2001, October 9.


Wilma Welsh with Ivy Howard last November in Vancouver

A Girl up There!

In fact, she's everywhere, and has been for a long time. BY WILMA WELSH

Out of the mouths of babes! What a joy to have the opportunity to talk with the little ones during Sunday worship. There are always delightful surprises. Recently I worshipped in St. Andrew's, Victoria, and one of the children seemed rather surprised to see a woman in the pulpit and told her grandmother, "There is a girl up there." She is the great-great-granddaughter of a former moderator, Rev. Dr. Lewis MacLean. How wonderful it is to visit with families who continue to worship together, many with three generations.

The General Assembly this year will celebrate Pauline Brown's "official" retirement after 55 years on the Bhil field in India. Pauline is the longest-serving missionary within our denomination. Let us give thanks to God for Pauline's ministry and we pray for continued good health for Pauline as she continues to serve after her official retirement.

In The Presbyterian Church in Canada we are grieving the loss in 2007 of several long-term former overseas and Canada workers. Ivy Howard, a diaconal minister who served in Toronto, Taiwan, and British Columbia; Kass Whitefield, who with her husband Jim, served as volunteers in India, Nigeria, and the Caribbean; Ruth Cowie, a long-time worker in the finance department at 50 Wynford; and Peggy McDougall, the wife of Rev. Dr. Goodwill McDougall, who spent many years in the WMS Bookroom. I was grateful that my location and time made it possible for me to attend and take part in the service for Ivy Howard. I visited Ivy on my last trip to Vancouver in November, and spent New Year's Eve with Kass Whitefield. I treasure these visits with retirees of our church. I give thanks to God for the many years of ministry given by each of these committed people.

News was received from India late last year that two men who turned themselves in after the other 13 Bhil prisoners were acquitted and released at the end of May. The recent release of these two men has been celebrated and now the Christians on the Bhil field are trying to get settled into some normality. This has been a very difficult three years for the Bhil Christians. We join them in praying that only good will come out of this situation in the end. The Bhil Christians continue to stand strong in their faith and support and encourage one another. Shortly after the deadly incident in January 2004, Pauline Brown reported that she was amazed at the strength of God's people on the Bhil field despite their heartache and pain, and especially regarding the courage of the Christians who lost everything when their homes were burned down. Presbyterians here contributed generously through the emergency appeal of International Ministries, the Women's Missionary Society and Presbyterian World Service and Development. Some of these emergency funds are now being distributed to the released prisoners to help them re-establish their lives.

Word has recently spread of another persecution at a place called Ratlam, India not far from Jobat. Inexplicably, charges have been laid against a Christian, Dr. Patience Williams of the Ratlam Christian Hospital, who was imprisoned for one night and released on bail. Let us uphold Dr. Williams and others in Ratlam in our prayers. I had the privilege again of visiting the hospital in Ratlam on my recent moderatorial tour last fall.

In February I travelled from rainy Victoria to the cold and sun of Winnipeg and Brandon. Despite the rain and the cold, I was warmed by the reception I received while visiting congregations, presbyteries, a youth group, and two WMS meetings.

Let us continue to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the ordination of women. Even the little ones are noticing women in the pulpit.

Blessings,

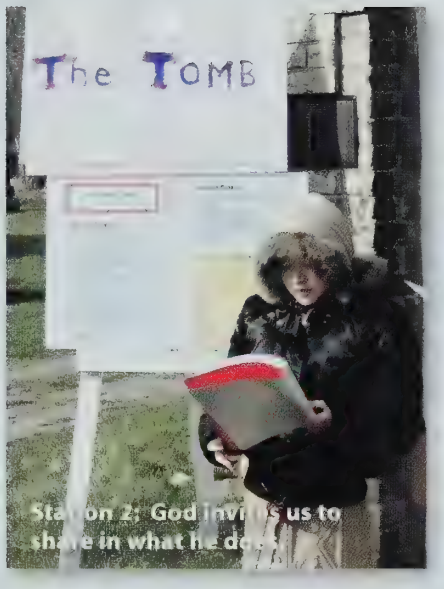
M. Wilma Welsh

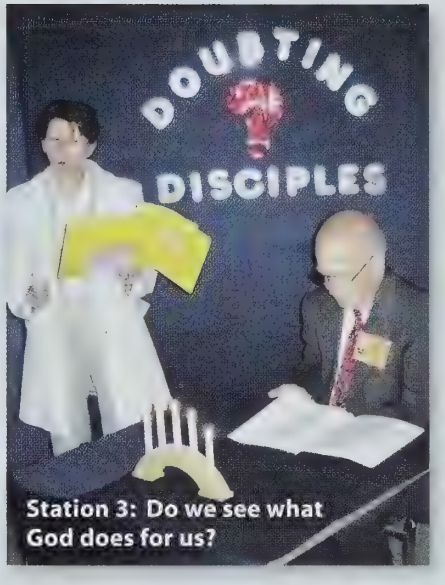
Moderator's Itinerary

April

4-14	Taiwan – General Assembly
20-22	Sault Ste. Marie, Synodical of Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda
22	Westminster, Sault Ste. Marie
29	Richmond Hill, Ont., Mission Awareness Sunday



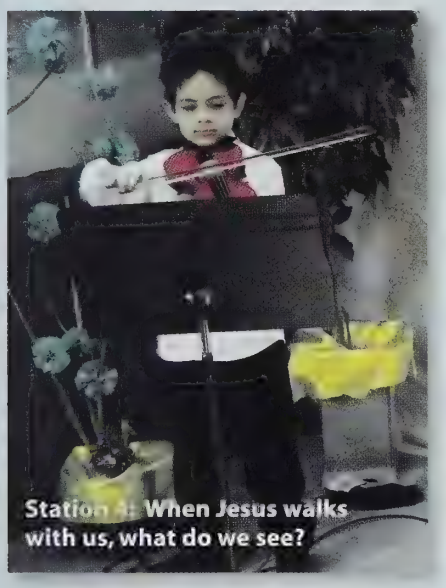


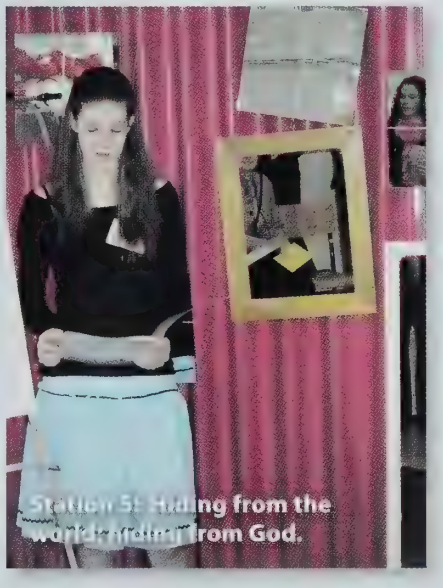


Station 3: Do we see what God does for us?

Stations of the Resurrection

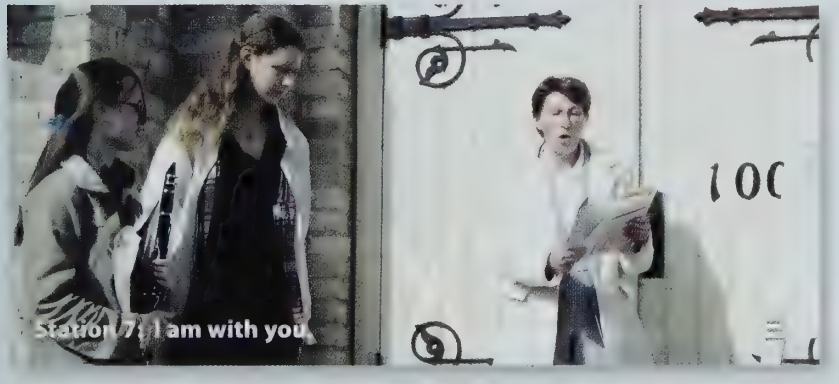
Richmond Hill, Ont., church tours the Easter story. PHOTOGRAPHY BY REV. JOHN CONGRAM


Station 4: When Jesus walks with us, what do we see?


Station 5: Hiding from the world, hiding from God.



Station 6: God breaks down all fences between Him and us.



Station 7: I am with you.

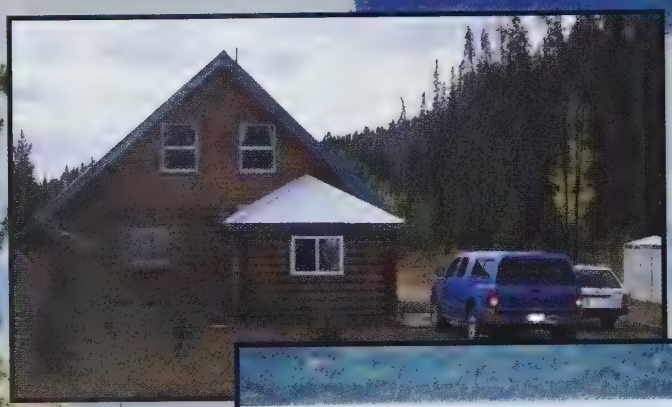
"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20)

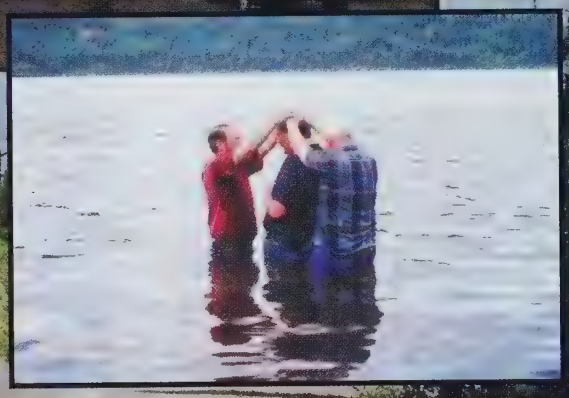
MISSION: POSSIBLE

British Columbia

Fill a minister's gas tan

The Cariboo Ministry, whi
covers an area of 80,0
square miles in the Caribo
Chilcotin region of Brit
Columbia, ministers to peo
who live beyond the reach
the traditional church. F
costs are a major concern
this ministry as ministe
must travel great distances
4x4 trucks to reach people
remote areas. One tank
fuel lasts approximately f
days, and allows a minister
travel 1,000 kilometr





$110 buys one tank
gas for one tr

$770 buys enough
for one mont

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or donate online at www.presbyterian.ca/donate. Refer to project CM28

SOMETHING EXTRA

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CIDA's Work Defended • Eastern Han-Ca's Challenges • Shared Ministries

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Record
May 2007



Making A Difference

Church partners offer a helping hand around the world

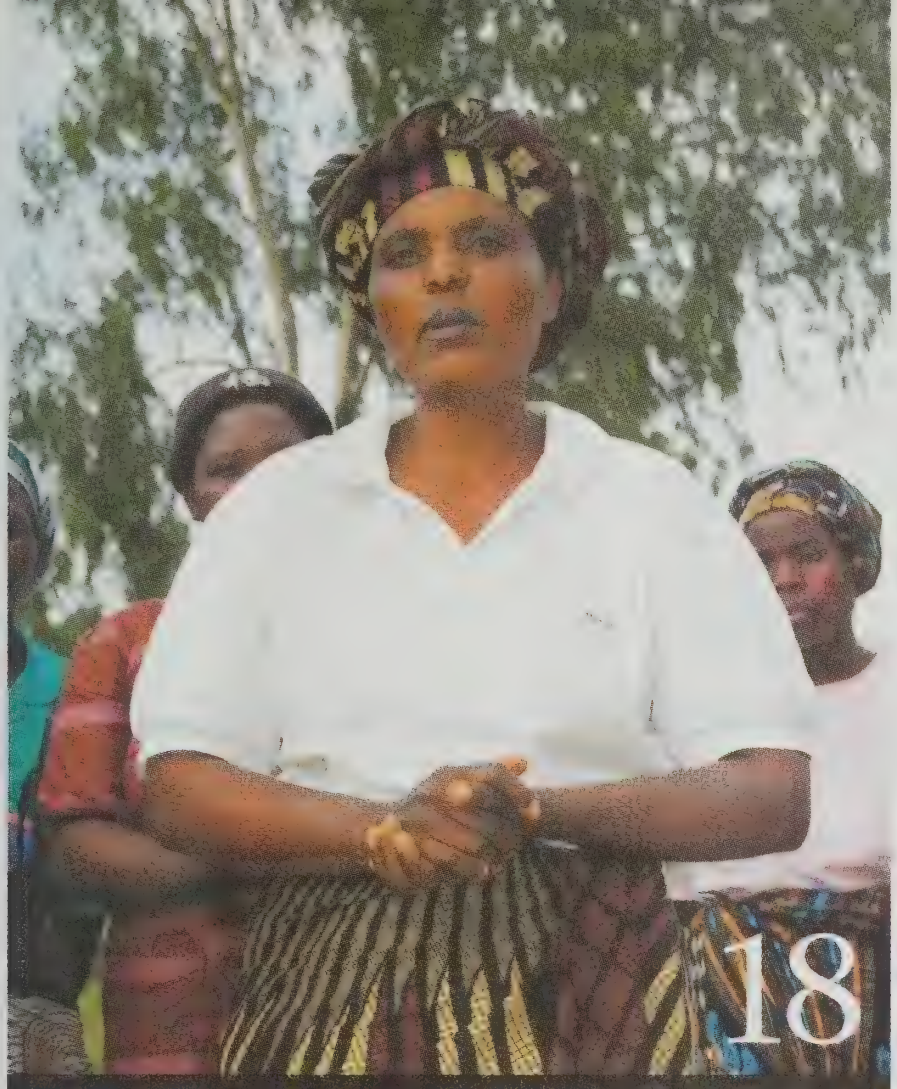
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A Custom-Made Celebration

An aluminum and metal cross that features the handprints of the St. Andrew's, Barrie, congregation was created by local gold- and silversmith Don Stuart. The cross is a celebration of the 50th wedding anniversary of St. Andrew's members, Arch and Helen Brown. It was Mr. Brown who first approached Stuart—both of whom are recipients of the Order of Canada—to create something special for the occasion. The cross stands at eight feet tall, is five feet wide and weighs 100 pounds. The 226 hands are cut from bronze, copper and aluminum, and Stuart estimates that construction took about 225 hours. Stuart, founder of Georgian College's jewelry and metals program, also completed a piece for Rosedale Presbyterian, Toronto.

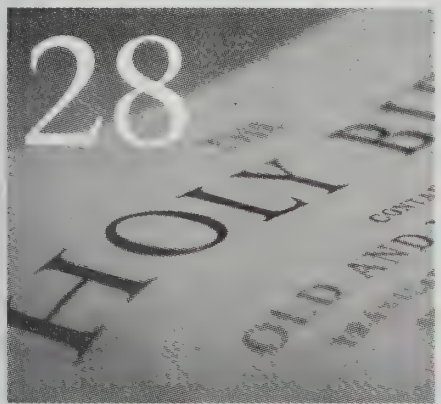
PRESBYTERIAN Record

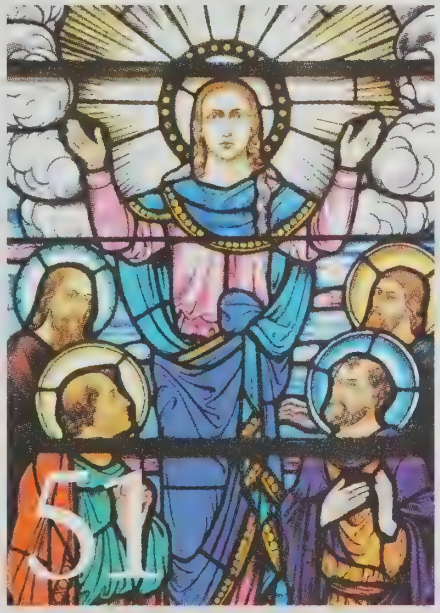


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Making a Difference

Church partners offer a helping hand. BY AMY MACLACHLAN





On the Cover: A boy walks the sandy paths in Malawi, Africa, where the PCC works with local partners to combat HIV/AIDS, improve agriculture and livelihood, and boost nutrition and health. Photography by Carl Hiebert, PWS&D

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MAKING GOD SMILE

We do what we do because we have no other choice. BY ANDREW FAIZ



March lived up to its billing on its first day. Around noon a snowstorm roared into Toronto falling hard and fast. The city ground to a stop. My usual 22-minute commute home took about a hundred minutes. I got off easy—many many others were stuck for hours.

Also that week there was a gas shortage in the city—prices were over a dollar per litre, if you could find a station that still had gasoline. There were editorials saying the government should intervene. On the day of the storm many cars ran out of gas.

Weather, government, multinationals: It was easy to feel we were all little pieces on somebody else's game board. The next two weeks were hard, with temperatures dropping to 20-below and lower; gas prices were still high; the government still didn't intervene (what could it do?). Despondency settled on the city.

Then suddenly on March 13 the temperature shot up to 14C. Birds could be heard. Sure gas was still over a buck—but it'd been that expensive before, then it had dropped 20 cents. Life on goes. There's birds in the sky, spring is around the corner. You know: it's Canada, it's winter, it's gonna get cold. But spring is here.

Both hope and despondency require careful ignorance of obvious facts. We have to choose: The sun rises everyday, average lifespan has increased dramatically, major diseases have been eradicated, the middle class grows bigger around the planet. So, the world is good. No?

No! The ozone hole and industrial pollutants mean the sun may not shine much longer, AIDS and other pandemics are wreaking their damage, the gap between the rich and poor grows larger.

So, which one is it? Well, what if all the statements are true: there is greater wealth distribution and the very rich are getting very much richer. New pandemics sweep across the planet, while old ones are permanently controlled.

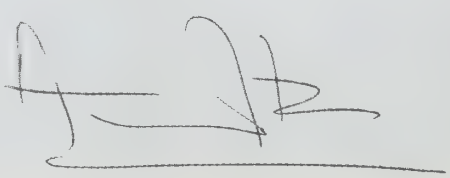
Either way, God is in His heavens and because He is, we do not need to force our understanding of the world into binary choices of either hope or despondency. We do not need ideological parentheses to focus our thoughts. We have that: we have the Word, the gospels, which compel us to give thanks all the while we act out our mission. And the curious thing is, that we, the Good News people, rarely indulge in good news (either lower case or upper).

There are a few stories this month of individuals who have chosen to act the mission, despite the cost to their career or life, because they are compelled to do so. Your givings support each of them. They do wonderful things, in horrible situations, because they have no other choice. That's the price for their faith.

Or take the case of our front inside cover this month: Arch Brown, a member of St. Andrew's, Barrie, Ont., wanted to celebrate his 50th wedding anniversary with Helen in a special way. He got in touch with the sculpture artist Donald Stuart to commission a work of art. Stuart got the congregation of St. Andrew's involved. What started as a personal memento became a communal act; what started with human love became testimony to the greatest love. It may not change the world—then again, it might, you never know, stranger things have happened—but it has brought joy to many. And that's something, isn't it? And God in His heavens too may have smiled. If ever briefly. And that's something. I'm sure it is.

Oh, and, a few days after that March thaw it snowed again, got cold again. But, it didn't matter. We had tasted spring. The despondency had lifted. If only for a little while.

This is my last at-bat in lead off. I happily return to my more modest position further down the roster. It's been fun but I look forward to David Harris' return.



Letters



Wild about Harry

Having attended two of the four previous Fosdick Convocations at the Riverside Church and unable to attend the fifth, held last October, I was delighted to read Andrew Faiz's comprehensive "notes" in the March *Record*. As in the previous convocations, it was clear the presenters represented different traditions and theological leanings. One of the great strengths of Riverside is that it has always valued diversity and encouraged dialogue. I believe that those qualities give definition to the meaning of "progressive." I would not equate the "progressive church" with the traditional names we assign to churches, ministers or denominations: liberal, conservative, evangelical, charismatic, fundamentalist, etc. Progressive church to me describes a faith journey that involves learning, growing, changing, praising, trusting and risking in the context of Jesus as Lord. Progressive church allows for diversity of points of view regarding biblical interpretation (e.g. virgin birth, same-sex relationships). Progressive church encourages wisdom in thought and courage in action.

There was one glaring error in the article. The convocation is named after Harry (not "Charles") Emerson Fosdick, the first senior minister of Riverside.

KEITH BOYER, BARRIE, ONT.

Has Andrew Faiz been watching too many M*A*S*H* reruns lately? The founding minister of Riverside Church in New York was not Charles Emerson Fosdick but Harry Emerson Fosdick, the famous anti-evangelical of the first half of the 20th century. He was a Baptist clergyman who had served a Presbyterian pulpit as stated supply until the Presbytery of New York cancelled this arrangement due to his denial of central Christian teachings. Several wealthy donors (including John D. Rockefeller) then proceeded to build a magnificent non-denominational church in which Dr. Fosdick could preach: Riverside Church.

JOHN VAUDRY, COTE SAINT-LUC, QUE.

Andrew Faiz responds: I am embarrassed by the error; my ankles are bloodied from kicking myself. And as long as I have been exposed let me come clean with two other items: Paul McCartney rented the church for his wife Linda's memorial service; and, though it was mentioned at the convocation that Dietrich Bonhoeffer preached at Riverside, it is unlikely that he did. He was a student across the street at Union Theological Seminary in the early 1930s and would not have had the status to stand in the pulpit. He returned to New York City in 1939 and worshiped one Sunday at Riverside. In his diaries he wrote of that experience, "The whole thing was a respectable, self-indulgent, self-satisfied religious celebration." Probably caught a bad day—which is my excuse for my egregious oversight.

Fair Trade not really fair

Economist magazine in December, 2006, made the case that "paying a guaranteed Fair Trade premium—in effect a subsidy—both prevents" crop diversification and "by raising the average price paid for coffee, encourages more producers to enter the market." So, it is both bad farming practice and bad economics.

In my church our leaders buy fair trade coffee at above average market prices and the congregation sips this coffee blithely, probably without giving it any thought. The *Economist* makes it abundantly clear that supporting Fair Trade coffee is not in the interest of the (small) growers.

COOS DE VRIES, BEACONSFIELD, QUE.

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Pontius' Puddle



For the sake of a metaphor

Metaphors are useful things. They help us get our heads around ideas that otherwise baffle us. Unfortunately, you can get yourself into serious trouble when you mistake metaphor for reality. "Life is a highway," Tom Cochrane sang. Metaphor or reality? If it's a metaphor, it implies that life resembles a journey with all its accompanying twists and turns, ups and downs. If it's reality, it suggests that all of us ought to become either truckers or bus drivers. I can see Hwy. 401 becoming more crowded even as I write.

If mistaking metaphor for reality can produce unfortunate results, like increased traffic congestion, mistaking reality for metaphor can produce some even more unfortunate results, namely letters like the one written by Rev. Zander Dunn (March). Dunn responds to an article by Calvin Brown about the virgin birth suggesting that one can either take what the Bible says on this matter literally or metaphorically. The biblical criticism in which all Presbyterian ministers are trained allows for it to be either, he says, with apparently neither position being wrong. While he's critical of the inconsistency of those who pick and choose which parts of the Scriptures to apply "religiously," his argument seems to be directed towards preserving his own freedom to do the same.

How then do we read the Bible? Is it really a matter of just deciding which parts I want to be reality and which parts I want to be metaphor? Can I really pick and choose, as I have done at so many potluck suppers? If that's the case, is there any reason why we should simply stick to the Bible? Aren't there lots of other helpful metaphors out there? That certainly seems to be the prevailing attitude in our society. More and more, I'm afraid that it's becoming the prevailing attitude within our church.

The biblical criticism that Dunn refers to properly suggests that the Bible is composed of many different kinds of writings. Different genres are to be read in different ways. Some are clearly metaphorical. Jesus says that He is the water of life. He didn't mean that we should pick Him up, squeeze Him and pour ourselves a drink. Other parts, however, are set out as historical fact. Read the beginning of Luke's gospel, in which most of the details of Jesus' birth are recorded, and you'll discover which genre Luke considered his gospel to be.

It's sad when we mistake metaphor for reality—our highways are congested enough as it is. It's even sadder when, as the Church, we mistake the reality of the gospel for metaphor. Maybe that's why so few of our sanctuaries are congested at all.

DUNCAN CAMERON, SCARBOROUGH, ONT.

Zander! Zander! How you have mellowed! I recall how some years ago you shocked many in the Presbyterian Church with a question about Jesus' anatomy. Now you get top marks for your outstanding Christian charity towards someone who does not even believe you can be a Christian! (i.e. Calvin Brown re: the virgin birth, which I as a good Presbyterian declared must be believed by Christians). Christian charity notwithstanding, I am disappointed. By the way, perhaps Calvin Brown would tell us where in the New Testament Jesus says that to be his disciple we must believe his mother was a virgin.

LOIS KLEMPA, WENTWORTH, QUE.

The real issue is not the way we interpret scripture but whether we believe God is the father of Jesus. If God is not the father, who is? A mere human? A mere human could not bring salvation to me by shedding his blood on a cross, or by any other means. My sins would still be my sins and I would have no hope of eternal life.

LYNDA FITCH, WROXETER, ONT.

Rev. Zander Dunn does not take the virgin birth literally, but metaphorically. What does that mean? What is the virgin birth a metaphor for? Such a position creates more difficulties than it answers. Did the Gospel writers knowingly mix fact and fiction, and present both as reality?

If God were not capable of the lesser miracle of the virgin birth, why should we believe that God raised Jesus from the dead? Or is the Resurrection also metaphor? If so, did the early Christian believers risk torture and martyrdom for the sake of a metaphor?

Perhaps I misunderstand Dunn's position. Here is mine: I accept the gospel narratives as given, as a historical record by eyewitnesses. My acceptance is more than intellectual assent to a formal belief

system. I have read many books in my 75 years, and there are few I can bear to read more than once. I have also done some writing myself. When I read the gospels, over and over again I am caught up increasingly in the integrity and guilelessness of the writers. I resonate with the authenticity and authority of the writing. Dunn mentions the legacy of biblical criticism that he shares with other students of theology. I too have read the commentaries and looked into the context of biblical writing, and I am acquainted with biblical criticism. But I will not allow biblical critics to override the witness of the Word and the Spirit—the plain evidence of the writing itself.

JOYCE GLADWELL ELMIRA, ONT.

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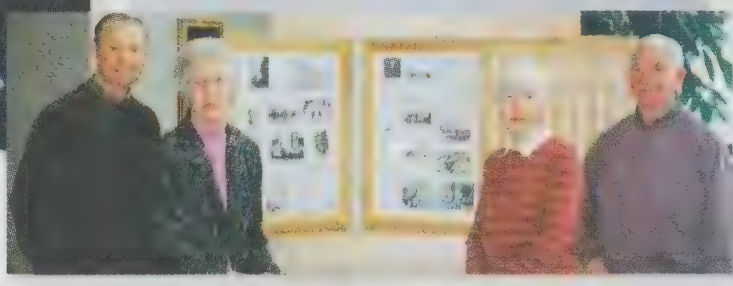
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Call it a living history — rather than compile a book, the history committee at St. Andrew's, Calgary, decided to create 10 historical panels recording a century of story, and always available in the church. A CD was also created. Members of the history committee seen here with the oak wood cabinet bearing the 100th anniversary tale are John Young, Muriel Young, Miriam Fleming and Jim Adams.



It's hard to believe but Jessie Bush, second from left, is really the new kid on the block here. To her right is Doug Pruss, retiring from the Board of Managers after 33 years. To her left is Vera Teasdale, who is leaving after 18 years as clerk of session (Jessie is the new clerk). We all know our moderator Wilma Welsh, of course, who has served the church in a variety of ways her whole life. And that leaves Rev. Thomas Kay, who next month will celebrate 26 years of ordination.

People & Places

For more People & Places submissions, please visit our website: www.presbyterianrecord.ca



A Raise the Roof Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser was held at St. Andrew's, Dresden, Ont. The teens, together with various church leaders, were very enthusiastic and raised over $400 for the roof replacement fund. Just like the syrup, it was pretty sweet.



The rules were simple for the fashion show entertainment at the Loving Your Neighbour event at West Vancouver: The total outfit could not cost more than $20. Most used the Salvation Army thrift shop but Jean Lawrence went to half price day at Mount Seymore United Church thrift shop and spent $9.75.

Jean Lawrence, Lola Alexander, Anna Brown, Tiana Farran, Laura Lytviak, Elizabeth Lytviak and Sally Brown. Please note that this photo includes three generations! Lola is the mother of Laura who is the mother of Elizabeth.



Rev. Peter Ruddell may have thought he was retired, but he's just finished a year as interim moderator of First, Penetanguishene, Ont., and recently returned from a working mission trip to Ukraine and Romania. In March the congregation thanked him for his service to them as they welcome their new minister, Rev. Mark Wolfe. Ruddell is seen with clerk of session Shirley Spearn and Dorothy Ruddell.



Ian and May Loudon arrived from Scotland in 1953 and very soon thereafter joined West Vancouver Church, which in those days met in a rented space in a dance hall (it's a pub now). Ian has served the congregation for half a century in various capacities, as envelope secretary, auditor and member of the board of managers. May's long service includes being a treasurer for the ladies group, teacher at the Sunday school and convenor of the flower guild. They were honoured in February.

It only takes a spark to get a fire going, and soon all those around can warm up to its glowing: Dora Anie, middle, has a dream to build a school in Ghana, West Africa. She shared that dream with Knox Preston, Cambridge, Ont. The congregation raised $1,300. Rev. Bill Bynum and missions and outreach elder Margaret Beattie present Anie the cheque.



HAD CAKE LATELY? Share your celebrations with the rest of the church. Send your stories to PnP@presbyterianrecord.ca along with your digital photographs, 300 dpi minimum, high quality JPEGs. Or mail the photographs to: The Record, 50 Wynford Dr., Toronto, M3C 1J7.
To be considered for People and Places, photographs should be sharp and everyone clearly identified. The Record reserves the right to reject any photos not of sufficient quality. Photographs cannot be returned.



SPOTLIGHT

The Presbytery of Ottawa's worship and witness committee hosted an event in March called Hearing the Voices of Peace, a panel discussion exploring the work of peacemakers in Israel and Palestine. Panelists represented Jewish, Muslim and Christian perspectives. Pictured are (l to r): Diana Ralph, an anti-Zionist Jew; Rula Odeh, a Christian of Palestinian origin; and Samah Sabawi, a Muslim, Gaza-born Canadian writer and human rights advocate. "Our perspectives deepen when we take the time to listen to others' stories," said congregation member Katie Munnik. "Peace is built on grassroots encounters like these."

LMA Names Staff to Two Positions

New web manager arrives



Peter Johnson

Peter Johnson of Queensville, Ont., has been named the new web administrator for the church's national website. Johnson began his work on April 2 and brings with him a strong background as a web programmer and designer. He enters his position at a time when there is a major redesign and reconstruction of the denominational website. He attends St. Andrew's, Newmarket, Ont., and plans to marry in the fall.

Plater moves to Mission Education



Karen Plater

The Life and Mission Agency has announced that **Karen Plater** has been appointed Associate Secretary for Mission Education and Stewardship. She has been communications coordinator for Presbyterian World Service and Development for 11 years.

"Seeing churches become engaged in relief and development work through both PWS&D and the Towards a World without AIDS campaign has helped remind me what it means to be church in the world," said Plater. "In this new position, I look forward to working with churches to find more ways we can use the gifts God has given us to care for the poor, speak out for the oppressed, demonstrate love and compassion for one another and share the gospel message of love, hope and faith."

Plater replaces Annemarie Klassen, who is retiring after 11 years in the position. The decision was made at the LMA committee's March meeting. Rev. Daniel Cho, convener, expressed his appreciation to Klassen on behalf of the committee. The transition will happen gradually over the summer months. *–AM*

Volunteers to be Agency's Focus

BY AMY MACLACHLAN

'Prepare people for mission' is LMA's mantra

THE WAY MISSION IS ORGANIZED AND delivered, who is involved, and how the national office engages participants, will undergo a massive shift, according to a document discussed at the church's national mission agency committee meeting.

The change will require "shifting of volunteer program responsibilities" that will affect several departments at the national office, according to the yet-to-be finalized proposal. It will streamline program delivery and partner relationships, clarify policies and procedures, and will create a single team to handle all aspects of mission, study tours, and educational trips.

"The LMA has been thinking about change for the last seven to eight years"

"People want this new aspect of mission," said general secretary Rick Fee. "They want hands on; they want to be doing something."

He said the idea "has been there for years, but we feel the need to give it more prominence."

The plan would focus on seniors as well as youth, and assisting congregations and individuals wanting to engage in "voluntourism."

"We don't want this to be 50 Wynford Drive-driven, but national, in congregations, using people across the country to prepare people for mission," said Fee. "How can we better use volunteers, both in the office and on trips?"

"Building the church is easier to preach than to practise," said committee convener Rev. Daniel Cho. "Experiencing and cultivating it is a different thing."

Fee said the agency staff met recently to look at the emergence and development of volunteers in mission, and the experience of lay people and clergy in mission.

The chance to experience people different than ourselves is one of the greatest challenges and opportunities for growth, said Cho.

"We have different gifts, we look different, and when it comes down to it, when we see each other face to face, we are confronted with that difference, and we can't get past it.

"When it gets down to living it, experiencing it, and working at it to cultivate the body of Christ, it's still a challenge," he said, "a challenge to really embrace one another, look at one another, see everything that person is about."

The question, he said is: "What are we willing to choose, to embrace?"

The Women's Misisonay Society and the Atlantic Mission Society will be asked for input before details are finalized.

Funding the new direction was also on the table. Between 1994 and 2004, the church received about $470,000 a year in undesignated bequests. In 2005, it was $2.4 million; last year it reached $3.06 million.

Last year, Assembly Council said 35 per cent of these funds should be used "to encourage mission priorities."

While bequests are up, Presbyterians Sharing is lagging. A report said the suggested allocation from congregational income would raise $15 million, but only about $8 million is received.

Council ponders biennial assembly

THE POSSIBILITY OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY meeting every other year garnered the most discussion at an otherwise low-key Assembly Council meeting in March.

Questions were raised about how business and workload would change; and what power would have to be delegated to council in order to govern between assemblies. Loss of fellowship and opportunities for student and young adult representatives were balanced against the financial savings. (Assembly costs the national church about $250,000, plus another $20,000 for the local arrangements committee).

The Presbyterian Church (USA) meets every other year, and both the United and Anglican churches' national governing bodies meet every three years.

Assembly's permission will be sought to establish a task group to study the implications and report back next year.

The theme of justice was set for the 2008 assembly and Hamilton Presbytery will host the 2009 gathering.

Pending approval at assembly, a new policy for professorial stipends was approved, breaking the link to national executive pay. Stipends were compared to those of church colleges on the same campuses as Presbyterian colleges, and to salaries paid by university theology, religion and philosophy departments. Four pay scales were established to be reviewed every three years.

The draft policy on addressing allegations of racial harassment will go to assembly before being sent to presbyteries for study. A committee will now develop diversity policies for the church.

And Crieff Hills is pondering going "green." A two-year fundraising drive would be needed to raise the estimated $2-million needed.

Activists Want Fair Access for All

Make water a human right.

BY AMY MACLACHLAN



CANADIANS ACROSS THE COUNTRY took to the streets, hosted public forums and wrote their politicians during the week of March 22, World Water Day, to draw attention to a range of water justice issues, including Canada's refusal to ensure that access to clean water is a human right, and problems created by bottled water consumption.

More than one billion people worldwide do not have access to clean water, including Canadian communities that are

"Water is a necessity of life and must be considered a fundamental human right"

under long-term boil water orders. Many Aboriginal communities in Canada, such as Kashechewan, are particularly disadvantaged, with 80 communities currently needing to boil their water.

The United Nations has recognized water as a right, but in 2002, Canada was the only country to take a position against this right. The water day events were organized by KAIROS (an ecumenical social justice organization that the Presbyterian Church supports), the Council of Canadians and CUPE. KAIROS has been calling on the federal government to change its position and to develop a policy that will ensure national standards for water.

The current policy's objective "is to encourage the use of freshwater in an efficient and equitable manner consistent with the social, economic and environmental needs of present and future generations," according to Environment Canada's freshwater website.

"The underlying philosophy of the policy is that Canadians must start viewing water both as a key to environmental health and as a scarce commodity having real value that must be managed accordingly."

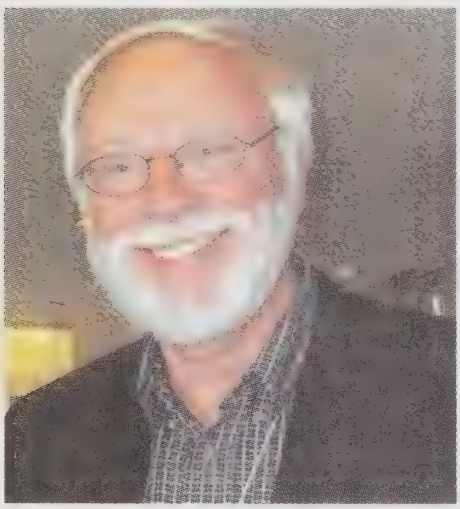
A key aspect to ensuring the policy is "water pricing", where Canadians could see increased costs for water usage, and be subject to a sort of penalty system for overuse or pollution.

"Realistic water pricing would make the users conscious of the real value of the resource and delivery systems, and would reduce the demand on those systems," states the policy. "It would also encourage efficiency through improved technology, and lead to water conservation and reduced pressures for costly system expansion."

Concerns about increased consumption of bottled water stems from the fact that empty bottles can end up in landfills, and the petroleum needed to produce the plastic bottles puts an added strain on fossil fuel supply. Bottled water also creates a two-tier system as only those with enough disposable income can afford to purchase it regularly.

"Water is a necessity of life and, therefore, must be considered a fundamental human right. And access to clean drinking water must remain in public or municipal control," said Sara Stratton, KAIROS' campaigns coordinator, in a press release. "The very notion of buying bottled water, when a safe and publicly-funded utility provides drinking water, undermines the collective understanding of water as something which we all need to live."

—with files from KAIROS



Moderator-Elect is Named

REV. DR. J. H. (HANS) KOUWENBERG of Calvin Church, Abbotsford, B.C., has been named moderator-elect for the 2007 General Assembly this June in Waterloo, Ont. Kouwenberg came to his current charge after 20 years at St. Giles', Prince George, and has served on a number of the church's national committees. He has been clerk and moderator of synod and presbytery, is currently convener of the board of St. Andrew's Hall and a member of the Committee on Theological Education, and has been on the governing bodies of all three theological colleges. In 2005, Presbyterian College awarded him an honorary doctorate. He has also acted as chaplain for the Royal Canadian Legion and for correctional services. He currently teaches literature at a Bible college in Abbotsford. Kouwenberg will be officially installed as moderator at the assembly.

Church Signs Deal with Corrections Canada

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH RECENTLY signed a revised agreement between the federal government and the Interfaith Committee on Chaplaincy for Corrections Services Canada, an advisory group on the provision of religious and spiritual care to inmates and the oversight of federal prison chaplains. Rev. Will Ingram, a minister at Morningside High Park, Toronto, signed on behalf of the committee, along with Correctional Services Commissioner Keith Coulter. The document describes the relationship between the two organizations and outlines how chaplaincy services are provided in correctional institutions.

The revisions include additions to the overall vision of the place of spirituality within the human experience and the role of chaplaincy within the mandate of the CSC; attention to the role that chaplains play with families of offenders; increased commitment to developing chaplaincy services in the community setting; and recognition of some of the specific issues to providing chaplaincy services to female offenders.—*With files from Terry Richardson, National Chaplaincy Headquarters*

Sharing Cultures at Knox

THE CENTRE FOR ASIAN-CANADIAN Theology and Ministry at Knox College is hosting a seminar on May 28 on cross-cultural issues. The third and last in an annual series, the seminar aims to explore the histories of the Presbyterian Church in Canada along with those of the Korean, Ghanaian, Chinese and Taiwanese churches, and explore how these communities can share mission and ministry in the future.

"We live in a multicultural society. Some churches share space with ethnic congregations. Some are part of the same congregation," said In Soo Kong, director of the Asian Centre. "We thought that a space to understand each other was also needed. It helps us learn of everyone's past and have a cultural exchange in the present."

To register, email knoxasian.centre@utoronto.ca or call (416)978-0371.

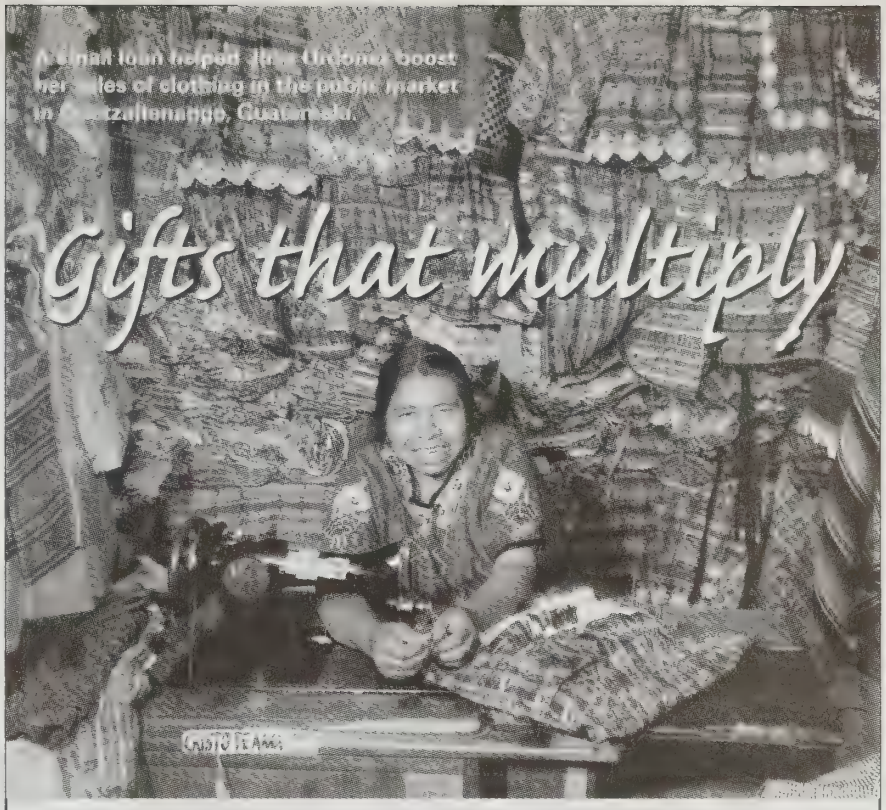


PHOTO: PAUL JEFFREY, PWS&D

Helping people earn an income that allows them to live a life with dignity is an important part of Presbyterian World Service & Development's community development work. In the small village of Olintepeque The Fraternidad of Maya Presbyterials, with the support of PWS&D, has been working with women and families on education, health care and small business development. Many of the women in this K'iché-speaking community are using small loans from the Fraternidad to weave and embroider beautiful clothes and fabrics. They sell what they make and use the income to send their children to school and put food on the table. As their children go to school they have a chance for a brighter future and the whole community benefits.

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CIDA's Work Defended

'What would Africa be like if it had not been given that money?' BY AMY MACLACHLAN

A SENATE REPORT RELEASED in February paints a bleak picture of Africa's economic state and chastises a Canadian agency for dumping billions of dollars into the continent with little to show for it.

"The committee has concluded that 40 years of foreign aid has done little to propel Africa from economic stagnation or to improve the quality of life on the continent," states the report of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee. "CIDA is ineffective, costly and overly bureaucratic."

The report points out that between 1965 and 2004, Sub-Saharan Africa's international economic share has not only stagnated, but actually dropped to nearly half of what it was previously. This despite $12.4-billion in bilateral aid sent to Africa from CIDA since 1968.

Though there seems to be consensus that the Canadian International Development Agency needs some sort of a makeover—be it dispatching more workers to the field with decision-making power, decentralizing operations, or even scrapping the agency all together and creating a single "Africa Office" (all of which the report suggests)—do CIDA's shortfalls mean that Canadian money, and specifically Presbyterian money, has been squandered?

Karen Plater says no. As communications coordinator for Presbyterian World Service & Development, which receives CIDA money for approved projects at a 3:1 cost sharing ratio, Plater has seen the results of CIDA projects.

"CIDA has always challenged us to ensure our projects are having the results we want, and to ensure there is poverty reduction. If we hadn't had the CIDA funds, there are projects we wouldn't have been able to do—especially more abstract projects that can be difficult to raise money for, like gender issues and women's empowerment.

"Maybe it's difficult to see at the national level, but when you're talking about people's lives, if the money hadn't been given, they almost certainly would have been worse."

She thinks some of the recommendations are good ones—like empowering field staff to make decisions and using their skills and abilities to direct projects—but she maintains that a Canadian connection is important in order to communicate to policy-makers what is needed on the ground.

Conversely, moving CIDA under the jurisdiction of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, as the report suggests as a possible solution, is something Plater warns against.

"I think Ottawa should coordinate aid, trade, security and foreign affairs, but to have them bundled under one roof could be dangerous. I'm concerned about linking aid to the geo-political affairs of Canada.

"I think the idea of strengthening CIDA to be more like the UK's Department for International Development so that it would have more policy clout, decision-making authority and financial resources is interesting," said Plater, referring to a suggestion in the report that CIDA should morph into something resembling the powerful and autonomous British agency.

"It's good to look at the operations and ask if this is effective, but it dismisses the accomplishments that CIDA has made over the years. It's easy to say, why haven't we eradicated poverty? But these aren't easy issues to deal with, or easy problems to solve."

Much of PWS&D's development work with CIDA is concentrated on agricultural productivity and access to micro-finance and small business development—grassroots areas that need strong support and often have quick and measurable results. Plater said it is changes in these areas, on the smaller, local level, that were most likely overlooked in the Senate report, which focused more on national results—areas that are slower to show change and are much more difficult to affect.

"It's good to look at the operations and ask if this is effective, but it dismisses the accomplishments that CIDA has made over the years"

"I don't think it is fair to just look at 'Africa's share of the global economic activity drop from 1965 to 2004' and put all the blame on aid. Certainly foreign trade policies and macroeconomic realities have a greater influence than aid," she said. "We have seen our aid programs have a positive impact on people's lives and I think the funds CIDA directs to PWS&D are effectively used.

"The question I always like to come back to," said Plater, "is what would Africa be like if it had not been given that money?"

Partnering with PWS&D

In April 2006, PWS&D began a new five year program with CIDA, with an annual grant of $458,000 (an increase of 15 per cent over the 2003-2006 program). In addition, the program length was extended from three years to five years, which cuts down on the work load for PWS&D and its partners, who have to submit lengthy reports and other paperwork with the initiation of each new program. PWS&D must raise one quarter (or $152,667 each year) to meet the 3:1 fund matching agreement it has with CIDA. In January, CIDA committed an additional $200,000 to PWS&D for new work projects. The funds are destined for partners in Malawi, India and El Salvador for projects in HIV/AIDS, health, furniture and equipment, and training of community health workers.

Controversial Imam Unsettles Community

Mosque planned for Ontario town. BY AMY MACLACHLAN

Plans for the first mosque in Newmarket, Ont., have raised a national ruckus. A connection to Zafar Bangash, a controversial imam currently serving a large mosque in Richmond Hill, has some residents of this town about 50 kilometres north of Toronto wondering what will be taught in the renovated building.

"My main concern about this whole issue is Zafar Bangash and his views, which are anti-Semitic and extremely vitriolic …" said Jack Hurst, past-president of the Newmarket Ratepayers Association, in a story in the *Toronto Star*.

Project manager Hazem Gidamy has said the mosque will serve as a satellite to Bangash's 17,000-square-foot mosque in Richmond Hill. But Ansar Ahmed, a spokesperson for the mosque, said Bangash will not be the mosque's leader and has no official role at the place of worship. Bangash is president of the Islamic Society of York Region, which owns the mosque.

Bangash has been outspoken in his support for the regime in Iran and the terrorist group Hezbollah. Meir Weinstein, director of the Jewish Defence League Canada, called the mosque a possible "den of terror," according to a report in the York Region publication *The Era-Banner*. The American JDL is itself "a right-wing terrorist group" according to the FBI, although Weinstein says the Canadian branch is "independent."

Rev. Mark Lewis, convener of the Presbyterian Church's Interfaith and Ecumenical Relations Committee, is frustrated by the negative reaction.

"The outrage over the mosque … is due to ignorance, unfounded fear and prejudice," he said. "Those who associate the Muslim faith with terrorism have been duped by the preaching of corrupted religious leaders who refuse to see value in any religion but their own," said Lewis.

"Local congregations should contribute to the establishment of the Newmarket mosque with the same love and compassion one would show to a family member. Jesus Christ offered God's love to all persons regardless of their religious beliefs."

Rev. John Henderson, minister at St. Andrew's, Newmarket, said local faith leaders recently met in a synagogue to discuss establishing an interfaith council. And he said the local ministerial considered sending a welcome letter to the mosque's organizers, but the idea was quashed by members worried about Bangash's extreme views.

"I felt this was very unfortunate as in this day and age, we need to be talking and in some kind of fellowship," said Henderson.

Lewis said although Bangash has spoken out against Israel and U.S. President George W. Bush's actions in Afghanistan, "many other persons and agencies have voiced similar concerns."

He noted the 2003 General Assembly decision to adopt a statement condemning Israeli policy as draconian, and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s call for selective divestment from Israeli companies in protest to the separation barrier through Palestine.

"To refer to the new mosque as a 'house of terror' is clearly an insidious and hateful attempt to stir-up latent fears of the unknown in the hearts of naïve persons," said Lewis.

Though Bangash could not be reached for comment, a letter by Ansar Ahmed on behalf of the executive committee and congregation of the proposed mosque, stated: "Mosques, churches, synagogues and other religious institutions play a key role in bringing people of different faiths together, as friends and neighbours. We need to encourage just this type of dialogue so we can tear down walls, and begin to build bridges."

BUILDING HOPE

Anishinabe Fellowship Centre serves mainly Aboriginal people who live in difficult circumstances.

Unrelenting poverty and feelings of hopelessness result in crime, addictions, family violence and suicide.

The First Steps Program

At Anishinabe, the aim of the First Steps Program is to help individuals identify their own "Path" toward a wholesome life. This unique program assists clients to become productive members of society. As trust develops and self-esteem grows, staff and individuals work on solutions to address:

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- addictions
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WICM

Over a three-year period, program participants begin volunteering at the centre to develop good working habits. Each individual receives a weekly allowance of $25 to augment a limited income. Through intensive counseling, support, advocacy and referral, individuals begin to choose productive, wholesome lifestyles.

The yearly cost of the allowance is $20,000. Please be part of the solution and contribute to The First Steps Program.

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WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF



Religious groups go green

ENI—Religious groups have joined civic groups and international companies that include Volvo and General Electric in backing The Path to Climate Sustainability by the Global Roundtable on Climate Change. The coalition of more than 150 groups is calling for governments to set "scientifically informed targets" for reducing greenhouse gases and carbon dioxide emissions.

"Global warming is an urgent problem that is not only affecting God's planet but also God's people," said Rev. Robert Edgar, general secretary of the U.S. National Council of Churches, at a February conference to launch the initiative.

Rev. Samuel Kobia, general secretary of the World Council of Churches, described the statement as being "carefully drafted and urgently needed". He said the council will continue to bring "the concerns this statement addresses to the world".

The statement urges an increase in the use of non-fossil fuel energy sources, and recommends a market price be placed on carbon emissions to reward energy efficiency.

Hong Kong Catholics become poor for Lent

ENI—Lent should be for penitence and fasting, and it should also be a time to live as the poorest people do and be united with them, say Roman Catholic labour activists in Hong Kong.

The Catholic Commission for Labour Affairs launched a "become poor for a week" campaign during Lent, asking those taking part to spend no more than 350 Hong Kong dollars (US$45) during one week, in order to understand how low-income families survive.

Ngan Ping of the Catholic Commission said it was hoped participants would reflect on the reasons behind poverty in well-developed cities like Hong Kong, where despite the presence of many well off people there are many more poor.

Wedding fairs attract British churches

ENI—Churches in England and Scotland are taking part in wedding fairs to encourage couples to get married and to do so by marching down the aisle rather than into a registry office.

"Helping to create a wonderful wedding day is important, but we also provide support and guidance before and after the big day," said Rev. Stephen Blakey, a Church of Scotland minister who organized a local wedding fair. "Marriage is a lifelong journey. We hope our wedding fair will be good for all those involved—the young couples planning their wedding, the exhibitors who are looking for business, and our church."

The Church of England was a newcomer this year to the National Wedding Show in London. Those attending said its stand made a contrasting and modest note among stands promoting goods and services. The church has also published *Making the Most of Weddings*, which suggests ways to make the big day greener and less expensive.

Churches mark slave trade anniversary

ENI—Christians in Toronto commemorated the 200th anniversary of the law abolishing the slave trade in the then-British Empire, at a service in a church founded as the city's first black congregation in 1826.

"This is an opportunity for people of faith to reflect on the ghastly past," Jean Augustine told an overflow crowd of white and black Christians. In 1993, Augustine became the first black woman to be elected to Parliament. "We must acknowledge the past in order to move towards tomorrow."

The Abolition of the Slave Trade Act was passed on March 25, 1807 by the British parliament.

"We must recognize that Canadian society was built on the backs of slaves and of aboriginal people," said Nora McMurtry, co-chair of the Canadian Ecumenical Anti-Racism Network of the Canadian Council of Churches, which sponsored the event. "Church leaders even owned slaves."

In a statement, the government said that while the territory had not been directly involved in the transatlantic slave trade, slavery is reported to have existed in Canada from 1628, although the earliest historical records suggest it was first established by Louis XIV in 1689 in New France.

Austrian church condemns mall abortion clinic

ENI—Austrian church leaders have accused retailers of devaluing human life after an abortion clinic opened alongside other stores at a new Vienna shopping mall.

"You can now drink coffee, watch a film, buy clothes and then have an abortion," said Erich Leitenberger, spokesperson for the Roman Catholic Church's Vienna archdiocese. "This trivializes decisions about life and death, and I think a lot of people have got the message."

The inclusion of the Venus Med clinic, advertising "abortion services" and "sexual therapy," in the capital's shopping mall has provoked controversy in Austria, where Roman Catholics make up 74 percent of the population of 8.1 million.

"You don't have to be especially religious to see what a fatal vision of our consumer society this presents," said Cardinal Christoph Schönborn. "To be able to shop and have an abortion under one roof suggests human life is being banalized in a dangerous, unimaginable way."

A Real Culture Club

Church community is the only real response to cultural cacophony. BY JANE E. SWATRIDGE

It's become popular not only to make fun of the church and people of faith, but to attempt to attack or topple Christian tenets. Books like *The Da Vinci Code* and documentaries claiming archeological discoveries of the bones of Jesus and his family appear to threaten the very foundations of the Christian church. Our society has forgotten and neglected its roots, and we've lost the Sabbath. Church has moved from the essential institution at society's hub to a blip on the weekend radar, wedged between hockey practice and the scratch-and-save sale at Sears.

If anyone can prove Jesus was married, there's no call for gnashing teeth and rending garments. My guess is that the PCC, at least, will honour the fact by adding marriage to our list of sacraments. We will strongly encourage all those who are so joined to treat each other as a sacred blessing, and the church will continue uninterrupted in its role as Christ's hands and feet, serving to bring good news and hope in this weary, war-torn world.

We live in the midst of surround-sound noise where we've opted to accept, even invite the bombardment of near-constant stimuli from TVs, cellphones, iPods. Our culture is one of rabid consumerism, egoist entitlement, video violence, cult of celebrity and seeking spiritual support from a Pilates mat. Secular media tell us we should be threatened and keep picking away at us, perhaps hoping we'll burst into tears and have a red-faced breakdown, crumbling under the weight of their trumped-up truths. Surely there are more important aspects of Jesus' earthly life, death and ongoing life that could and should deeply impact Canadian culture.

Miraculously, church culture survives. Of course we have our issues. We get into fits over the price of programs and forget their real value. We get tangled up in church court regulations and forget that the soul of God's law is grace. We panic over empty pews and forget we're called to go out. But that's how we know there is a God who loves and forgives us, because if mortals were entirely in charge, the church would have died centuries ago. Love, grace and truth are bigger than all our petty concerns.

Walk into virtually any Presbyterian church on a Sunday morning—it's familiar and comforting and lends a sense of belonging. Our bulletins are similar across the country, our committees and volunteers from coast to coast are doing similarly good works locally and globally, and you can't beat our potlucks for great people, great laughs and great food. We give our time and talents without expecting to be paid; we send cards and casseroles to convey love and concern; we collect clothing, shoes, glasses, loonies, books, sandwich fillings and furniture, all to give unconditionally to people we'll never meet across town, across the country, across an ocean. This is our culture; it's wonderful and worthwhile and springs from our collective desire to appreciate Christ's example, then go and do likewise.

What we're about has substance, personal relevance and eternal meaning. There will always be new and better ways to get people's attention and tell the age-old gospel. Try them! There will always be new perspectives on our traditional definitions. Study them! But let's never do anything merely because it's popular or hip or gains us media coverage. We can be a positive voice and regain our place as a cultural norm in Canada only by remaining true to the Word, and by having the institutional integrity to do what is right by God's standards.

Rev. Jane Swatridge, formerly of fyi — for your inspiration urban ministry — is currently seeking a call.

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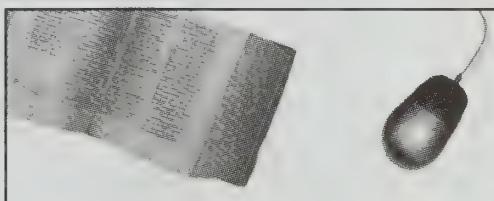
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"You must be the change you want to see in the world" – Mahatma Gandhi

Making Wor of Differen

Presbyterian Church partners live out the gospel around the world.

BY AMY MACLACHLAN



Rev. Uma Onwunta of Nigeria visited the Presbyterian Museum on a trip to Canada.

The Presbyterian Church is one of the most vibrant and active around the world, working in the fields of education, health, evangelism and peace. There are many partners in this work; national bodies, congregations and some special individuals who bring their own understanding of faith, justice and Christ to the unique communities in which they work. In the stories presented here, people have crossed borders and come to Canada to share their passion with local mission partners. If they didn't visit your congregation, read on—and learn how Presbyterians are truly making a difference.

Nigerian leader asks the difficult questions

He models his ministry after the words of Mahatma Gandhi who once said, "Nature has enough for our need, but not enough for our greed." Rev. Uma Onwunta, former principal clerk of the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria, believes Christians have an important role to play in helping heal the world of its ills. "So let's try to put away our greed and meet a need somewhere," he says.

Born and raised in Nigeria, a country of 132 million people and more than 250 ethno-linguistic groups, Onwunta lived through the civil war that killed more than one million people between 1967 and 1970. Violent conflict has been a staple in Nigeria's history, often fuelled by land disputes and Christian-Muslim tensions. He has learned how destructive greed and the quest for power can be. "What is it that makes people choose terrorism as a lifestyle? What environment precedes this?" he asks. "It's an environment of frustration, and people will always find it appealing to join a lifestyle that offers freedom."

If the problem is not solved, such a lifestyle will follow a person, no matter where they go. "You can't think someone isn't your neighbour just because he does not live in your town," he said. "The next day they could be here, and they come with all their baggage, both good and bad. We must find a way to help a world that is sick, bleeding and has lost its sense of direction."

Onwunta believes respectful dialogue is the key to solving problems. He is particularly interested in ethnic diversity, and how the church in Nigeria can address

a guide to Taiwan

POPULATION: 23,036,000

MEDIAN AGE: 34.6 years

BIRTH RATE: 12.56 births/ 1,000 population

DEATH RATE: 6.48 deaths/ 1,000 population

LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH: 77.43 years

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 6.29 deaths/1,000 live births

HIV/AIDS ADULT PREVALENCE RATE: n/a

PEOPLE LIVING WITH AIDS: n/a

RELIGIONS: mixture of Buddhist, Confucian and Taoist 93%, Christian 4.5%, other 2.5%

LITERACY (age over 15 can read and write): 96.1%

POPULATION BELOW POVERTY LINE: 0.9%

CURRENCY: New Taiwan dollar (1 TWD = 4 cents CDN)

SOURCE: CIA World Factbook



Rev. Ibu Kanbudan and Rev. Lin Ni-Ling of Taiwan visited Evangel Hall along with Rev. Sarah Kim (WMS). They are pictured with the hall's director, Joe Taylor.

these issues. "There are different groups in our church and our country, and the ethnic groups often don't get along," he says. "The message we have to preach is reconciliation, love and forgiveness."

Onwunta was in Canada in late 2005 to research the history of mission in the Presbyterian Church. He is grateful for the partnership between his church and the PCC, which began in 1954 when the first missionary arrived. A doctoral student at Stellenbosch University in South Africa, Onwunta spent much of his time in Canada at church offices combing through the archives and interviewing former missionaries.

He has come to realize that asking deep, pressing questions is one of the most useful and pivotal actions the church can take. "If we're not comfortable with where we are, what can we do?" he asks. "People who make a difference see that they can do something. You have to ask yourself, 'If everybody believed in the way I'm living, will everything be okay? If not, what can I do differently?'"

He said asking questions acknowledges our limitations as human beings, and helps us learn about ourselves and each other. He said the Bible is a prime example of the need for inquiry, and it is through this process that change occurs. "What is the problem? Am I the cause? What can happen and how? [Asking questions] helps you see, as an individual, that you have a role to play and you can make a difference."

Taiwanese women seek gender equality

Although the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan has ordained women since 1950, when the church celebrated the 50th anniversary in 2000, there were still congregations that refused to accept women as their pastor, says Rev. Lin Ni-Ling of the PCT's Women's Ministry Committee.

However, women do find greater acceptance in certain situations. "Women ministers are more willing to take on the responsibility in rural areas and small churches and are willing to participate in teamwork," said Ni-Ling. "Men often want to be the only one in charge."

Ni-Ling was in Canada last November along with Rev. Ibu Kanbudan to travel from Quebec to British Columbia to visit

"Women ministers are more willing to take on the responsibility in rural areas"

with women from the Women's Missionary Society, and to further discuss a possible exchange program between the two groups.

"The PCT has received so many missionaries from the PCC," said Ni-Ling. "This church has been a great partner to mission in Taiwan, so this is a new starting point to strengthen our sisterhood."

Kanbudan has worked in a congregation for three years. As an aboriginal person, her ministry has led her to serve



Rev. Friday Inya at the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria's General Assembly.

her own people, the Bunan tribe, in a small village. The village is divided into three areas and has two Presbyterian churches. There are 12 indigenous tribes in Taiwan, and Kanbudan ministers to the nation's fourth-largest.

While about 17 per cent of PCT's ministers, or 1,200 people, are women, Kanbudan said this is higher in indigenous tribes (her presbytery has a female moderator). This is heightened in the Amis tribe, where marriage follows matriarchal lines, with the man leaving his family's home for his wife's.

Both women discussed the difficulties women face, and the confusion that abounds in what is still a traditional society when it comes to gender roles. "In my church, if you have an ability, no matter if you're male or female, you can teach the people," said Kanbudan, "but the Bible says that women can't preach, and people are confused by that."

"Education of women in Taiwan is pretty equal; post-secondary education is about 50/50," said Ni-Ling, who first went to church when she was 12 years old, was baptized at 18 and then went to seminary. "Still, because the woman's role in the family is still very important, it is a dilemma, and will be forever I think, for women to fulfill their family role and their career.

"Sometimes people are still not willing to share an equal partnership with women, so it's a big challenge to fulfill a calling from God."

Both women said they were looking forward to seeing how Canadian women are treated, both in and out of the church. They were also to visit several of the church's native ministries.

"I believe the WMS does so much work because they have strong members who are willing to serve God," said Ni-Ling. "And it's good for me to see the homeland of the missionaries who have contributed to ministry in Taiwan."

Nigerian grows church through mission and evangelism

Rev. Friday Inya is passionate about spreading the Good News to his fellow countrymen. As the recently appointed head of the National Directorate of Missions for the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria, Inya is not only building bridges in his own country, but in Canada too. "In light of global mission, and the changing face of mission work, we need more and more mutual sharing so we can partner with each other," Inya said in an interview. "You can partner with us in our challenges, and maybe you will need us too, when you see both our strengths and weaknesses."

Inya was in Canada in October 2005 to talk to congregations in Ontario and British Columbia about his church. He wanted to educate Canadians on the challenges in his country and the work the church is involved in. He models his ideal after the

Nigeria at a glance

POPULATION: 131,860,000 (Africa's most populous country)

MEDIAN AGE: 18.7 years

BIRTH RATE: 40.43 births/ 1,000 population

DEATH RATE: 16.94 deaths/ 1,000 population

LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH: 47.08 years

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 97.14 deaths/1,000 live births

HIV/AIDS ADULT PREVALENCE RATE: 5.4%

PEOPLE LIVING WITH AIDS: 3.6 million

RELIGIONS: Muslim 50%, Christian 40%, indigenous beliefs 10%

LITERACY (age over 15 can read and write): 68% total; male 75.7%, female 60.6%

POPULATION BELOW THE POVERTY LINE: 60%

CURRENCY: Naira (1 naira = <1 cent CDN)

SOURCE: CIA World Factbook

Cuban basics

POPULATION: 1,383,000

MEDIAN AGE: 35.9 years

BIRTH RATE: 1.89 births/1,000 population

DEATH RATE: 7.22 deaths/1,000 population

LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH: 77.41 years

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 6.22 deaths/1,000 live births

HIV/AIDS ADULT PREVALENCE RATE: less than 0.1%

PEOPLE LIVING WITH AIDS: 3,300

RELIGIONS: nominally 85% Roman Catholic before the revolution; other Christians, Jehovah's Witnesses, Judaism and Santeria are also represented

LITERACY (age over 15 can read and write): 97% total; male 97.2%, female 96.9%

POPULATION BELOW POVERTY LINE: n/a

CURRENCY: 1 Cuban peso = 4 cents CDN

SOURCE: CIA World Factbook



Rev. Reinerio Arce Valentin speaks at Cuba's Evangelical Seminary of Theology.

Our mission is to prepare future leaders of our churches, and always with an

Apostle Paul's instructions to the Corinthians. "Paul encourages the Corinthian church to give in a mutual way, so none is left to be poorer or richer. They both enjoy a mutual blessing. We can't do it alone anymore, but we can do it together."

A minister and evangelist for more than 20 years, the 41-year-old Inya has been a Presbyterian since he first became a Christian in secondary school. As missions coordinator, he handles training and orientation of missionaries, researching new church development and redevelopment, and general coordination

"To see a lot of souls turning to Christ, to see work growing, is the greatest joy"

of mission fields in the mostly-Muslim north of the country, where the greatest concentration of this work is being done.

"Our greatest strength is the spontaneity of our faith and our ministry. We have little resources, but we try to do a lot," he said. "We also have a faith and a zeal that gives us the courage to reach them [remote peoples who have never heard the gospel]."

Although Inya touts the need for shared resources, he said long-term solutions are needed. "Both sides should be empowered," he said. "You have to get to the point where you can stand strong on your own. You have to provide the right training and environment, not just money."

His vision for the church has paid off. In the last five or six years, about 40 new congregations have sprung up in Nigeria—a country where 132 million inhabitants are roughly divided between Christians and Muslims. Inya said congregational support has been integral in the church's recent success, as has a renewed focus on evangelism.

Before the directorate was established, he said, growth was not an active pursuit. Churches were mostly transplanted rather than planted anew in remote areas. When the church asked Inya to get something started, he was working as a chaplain. "They said, 'Do mission.' I asked, 'Where?' They said, 'Anywhere!' There was no direction. But it's what we had been waiting for." The first batch of missionaries was sent out in April 2000.

"It may be a very risky task, but it's a great one," said Inya. "To see a lot of souls turning to Christ, to see work growing where it didn't exist before, is the greatest joy which nothing else can quench."

Cuban develops international encounters

Say the word "Cuba" and images of white sandy beaches, swaying palm trees, sunny skies and turquoise seas most likely come to mind; crumbling buildings, impassioned revolution and an ailing Communist leader may also pop up. But there is a Cuba that exists alongside these typical images; a country where churches are beginning



David Mburu stands in a drought-stricken field where the Presbyterian Church of East Africa is working to improve lives.

People have to [illegible]
the church cannot be a [illegible]

to flourish and hope for a better future is starting to take hold. "Students will be agents of transformation," said Dr. Reinerio Arce Valentin, president of the Evangelical Seminary of Theology in Matanzas, Cuba. "They have a prophetic consciousness. They're learning to say no to things that are against truth, justice and things that aren't gospel-based."

Only about seven per cent of Cubans are evangelical Christians. Currently, more than 200 students are enrolled at SET. Created in 1946 by Presbyterian, Methodist and Episcopal (Anglican) members, it is the only ecumenical seminary in Cuba, and the only one that grants degrees in ministry. Arce Valentin, who attends a Presbyterian church in Havana, said even when student enrollment was low, the seminary was used as "a place of encounter" for church leaders and international visitors.

Facilitating such encounters is a primary goal of the seminary. It operates an exchange program so students can gain experience in ministry and life, and learn more about the international church, and how the church struggles with challenges in particular societies. It currently runs a program with the Presbyterian College, Montreal.

Students from both countries learn about each other, helping to eliminate prejudices and stereotypes. "I see them change in the weeks they are here," Arce Valentin said. "In a global world, we have to globalize love and understanding. We are called by God to do that. We are all part of one family."

Arce Valentin, whose father is a past president of the seminary, was in Canada about a year ago to teach at Emmanuel College in Toronto, sponsored by the United Church. "Our mission is to prepare future leaders of our churches," he said during a visit to church offices, "and always with an ecumenical understanding. If it's diverse inside the seminary, students can understand the diversity of the body of Christ."

Churches experienced a huge boost in the '90s when changes in the constitution turned Cuba into a secular state from an atheist one. "Churches gained more possibilities," he said. "The government started to see the social commitment of the church and recognized its engagement."

He mentioned the ecumenical Christmas concert presented in Havana for the fifth year in a row. "It was on television, with a Christian message. Fifteen years ago, we never would have dreamt of this."

After celebrating its 60th anniversary, the church has cause for excitement, Arce Valentin said, as it grows in a political climate that seems willing to accommodate it. "This could pass," he said. "Numbers could go down again. So how can we prepare our congregations in a way that they continue to hear the call of God and continue to participate in church?

"Churches in Cuba are instruments

HIV/AIDS in Kenya

POPULATION: 34,708,000

MEDIAN AGE: 18.2 years

LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH: 48.93 years

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 59.26 deaths/1,000 live births

HIV/AIDS ADULT PREVALENCE RATE: 6.7%
People infected with HIV/AIDS: 1.3 million

RELIGIONS: Anglican and Protestant 45%, Roman Catholic 33%, indigenous beliefs 10%, Muslim 10%, other 2%

POPULATION BELOW THE POVERTY LINE: 50%

ABLE TO ACCESS ANTI-RETROVIRAL DRUGS: Less than 100,000

ORPHANS DUE TO HIV/AIDS: 1.1 million

PERCENTAGE OF HOSPITAL BEDS OCCUPIED BY HIV/AIDS PATIENTS: 50%

CURRENCY: Kenya shilling (1 KES = <2 cents CDN)

SOURCE: CIA World Factbook and UN AIDS



healthy communities in Malawi

Malawi is plagued by drought and poverty, and its 550,000 orphans regularly struggle to find enough to eat. That's why the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, supported by Presbyterian World Service and Development, has committed just over $60,000 and nine metric tons of mixed seed to the Soils, Foods and Healthy Communities program in the African country. The project's aim is to improve the soil fertility, food security, health and nutrition of resource-poor households in the Ekwendeni area.

"I am continually pleased and surprised by how well things are progressing," said Rachel Bezner-Kerr, a Canadian Presbyterian working on the project. "I can really see how this long term work is making a difference in people's lives. It's very satisfying."

More than 3,000 local farmers are participating, and research shows improvements in child growth and increases in household consumption of legumes. The program began last July and runs until July 2009 and CFGB estimates that 8,000 small farmer families will have tested legumes, drought-resistant crops and labour-saving agricultural options by the program's end.

of God in helping society develop values based on love, justice and peace. We must preach the kingdom of God, but also cure the sick and give food to the needy. Mission can't be one-sided. There are people who need us."

Kenyan worker respects the facts of AIDS

"With proper education and a change in our value system, we might conquer HIV," said David Mburu. "And as Christians, we must be optimistic and hope God does something for us."

Mburu works with the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) in Kenya as the assistant projects coordinator. His department, which he said parallels the PCC's Presbyterian World Service & Development, focuses largely on HIV/AIDS prevention and education. The 33-year-old Mburu was in Canada last April to attend PWS&D committee meetings.

While here, he noticed that many of Canada's HIV programs are care-based, while in Kenya, outreach is focused on education and awareness.

"But there are many similarities," he said. "HIV/AIDS cuts across the board, and there is stigma shared in both countries. We're trying to direct our education to fight such stigma."

PWS&D is a founding partner of the PCEA's HIV/AIDS program. As a certified "trainer of trainers," Mburu readies ministers and others for teaching people about HIV, and promotes education in his own congregation.

"There's lots of satisfaction if you can make a difference. There's nothing better than to change a life," Mburu told the *Record*. "Not because you want recognition, but because you enjoy God's creation and the life we have."

Mburu teaches people to "respect the facts," telling them about transmission, prevention, the reality of available drugs and the absence of a cure, socio-economic impacts, discrimination and nutrition, as well as theology and biblical foundations. "What can we borrow from the Bible to respond to HIV?" he asked.

He uses drama, song and poetry to convey his message, visiting churches and schools, organizing street presentations, and even going into private homes. Engaging local governments, he said, is key to getting the message out.

As is involving churches. Mburu said he is concerned that there are many people in leadership positions living with the virus, but not speaking out. "This is very negative," he said. "Compare this to Uganda, where many church leaders have come out and said they're living with HIV. This encourages their communities to be open too."

He said it's unfortunate more leaders can't be honest, adding that they fear they will lose their jobs or even be barred from entering a church. "People have to be respected" said Mburu. "The church should not be the judge."

"There needs to be a much more concerted effort. This is a disaster; nothing should be spared to make things better"

Another challenge is access to anti-retroviral drugs, which keep HIV in check and enable patients to live longer. Affordability, accessibility and compliance in taking them, are issues that must be addressed.

"There needs to be a much more concerted effort within the government and organizations that come to help," he said. "If it costs $5 for the drugs, but someone's wage is $1 a day, how will they pay for it? The government needs to make sacrifices. This is a disaster; nothing should be spared to make things better."

Mburu holds onto hope for the eradication of HIV/AIDS by citing the strides the international community has taken in fighting the disease. "There has been a lot of research," he began. "We have anti-retrovirals to live longer and cope with HIV, we've seen positive steps towards a vaccine, and statistics within the last five years show the prevalence of HIV has gone down in Kenya."

"There is a future," continued Mburu. "The big tragedy is despair."



Clarity and Depth

This book deepens spiritual and intellectual understanding. BY JAMES ROSS DICKEY

In his introduction to *The Master Preacher*, short and not to be skipped over, Rev. Sheldon MacKenzie's opening paragraph reads: "The Gospel of John is distinctly different from the other three. To begin with, it is written in language that is deceptively simple. A child may read and enjoy it. At the same time, while a mature adult may read it easily, he/she may understand it with difficulty."

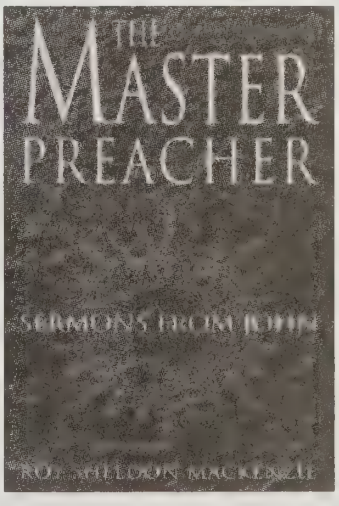
That mixture of clarity and depth is echoed in the sermons that follow. He eschews polysyllabic words like "eschew" and "polysyllabic," using a simple and direct vocabulary that nonetheless betrays years of New Testament scholarship and teaching. His intimate knowledge of the Greek text and the work of other scholar-commentators never intrude in a disruptive or obvious way. He is addressing the elusive ordinary worshipper/reader, not academic colleagues, yet the former are not cheated or condescended to, nor will the latter be disappointed, whether or not they agree, as academics oft find it difficult to do. He incorporates his scholarship in ways that challenge and expand stale readings of the text, but never in an in-your-face divisive way. Two examples that come immediately to mind are the way MacKenzie points to and explores John's use of sign (miracle) throughout his Gospel and the humanity/divinity of Christ as John saw this perpetual question of theological balance (Christology).

Six of the 25 sermons are devoted to what might be called the more theological/philosophical passages in John. The first three are based on the lyrically beautiful, deceptively simple prologue to John's Gospel. MacKenzie acknowledges that "as John Calvin taught, there are limits to what we are able to learn of God from the birth of the Messiah. These are the limits of human nature. Both His and ours. We can be taught only to the limits of our nature. When the Word of God was clothed in Bethlehem with humanity, it was clothed with our limitations." He goes on to use John to reclaim Christmas from the amalgamated cast of dozens at popular crèches and Christmas pageants, to restore it to its essential purity and significance.

Another three sermons come from the "Farewell Discourses" (specifically John 15, 16 and 17), Jesus' long good-bye to his disciples, which John employs for distinctively doctrinal purposes. Mackenzie, without diluting their significance in giving the Church an understanding of how to think of our Lord, adds an unforced, natural, and totally believable human touch, re-emphasizing or even restoring the conversational appeal of the "between friends" instruction.

That human element is predominant in all the sermons, drawn from incidents of human contact and/or conflict in the narrative. It is in these sermons particularly that MacKenzie draws on a long life as pastor and teacher. His anecdotes and illustrations are memorable: one of a young Newfoundland boy fed up with seeing Santy in a mall at Christmas is priceless. A couple of other lines, among many, provide a taste of his powers of description. "The faces of the men in religious authority were grim. They looked like undertakers in a town where no one dies."

Five of the sermons come from John 9, the story of the man born blind and the hullabaloo of nastiness after he had his sight given him by Jesus. I confess that at first I was a little fatigued with such a concentration, anxious to get on with fresh settings. It is only by reading them through that, at the end, you see why MacKenzie has spent so much time and space on the story, perhaps itself originally a sermon! The incident is central to the Gospel,



The Master Preacher: Sermons from John
Roy Sheldon MacKenzie
Fairway Press, Lima Ohio, 2006



and, with the raising of Lazarus, Loose Him And Let Him Go, (sermon 17) the key to John's perspective. MacKenzie supplies both an appendix and an outline to assist the reader in working through the ninth chapter, as well as a very useful basic bibliography to the entire book.

I might also defer, if only a little, from a point or two in the sermons on the paralytic by the Sheep-Pool in Jerusalem from John 5 (Do We Really Want To Get Well?) and the orphan in chapter eight, the woman taken in adultery (A Conscience Or A Stone?). But MacKenzie himself, in footnotes here and there—mercifully few—points to other helpful understandings.

"When the Word of God was clothed in Bethlehem with humanity, it was clothed with our limitations"

The only other criticism, and it is minor, that I have to offer is that in successive sermons he proposes that the date of John's Gospel was written 65 and 70 years, respectively, after the Resurrection. We could average the discrepancy out, if it is that important to us, to 67.5, i.e., May 67 CE, but that would be unnecessarily splitting hairs.

People tend to buy collections of sermons because they know the preacher personally, or need a suitable gift for some young person on whom they want to project piety, or for someone for whom pious is both an advertised attitude and a barrier to normal gift-giving. I confess to the first category, but urge those who read this review to expand or abandon the last two. This book will deepen the spiritual and intellectual understanding of any serious Christian, without anesthetic.

Rev. James Ross Dickey is minister at St. Paul's, Hamilton, Ont., and was formerly the editor of the Record.

Special Book Excerpt

A Conversation at Night

A sermon on John 3: 1-11; 13.

BY SHELDON MACKENZIE

The woman had been busy all day.
Now, she was longing for a cup of coffee.
So, she went to the nearest coffee shop,
where she ordered a coffee and a muffin.
Then sat by herself at a little table by the window.
It was almost closing time.

Suddenly a young person in her late teens was standing beside her.
She was wearing a heavy university jacket.
"May I sit down with you?"
"Yes, please do."
"You don't remember me, do you?"
"You look familiar, but I can't remember your name."
"I used to play with Helen when we were only 3 or 4."
"Oh, yes, of course. Now I know who you are."

Then began a long conversation.
It included the latest on Helen, on her boyfriend,
on her work in Toronto and some shared memories.
And, some confidential concerns about her life.
Where it might or might not be going.
Confidential conversations are easier at night.
It has always been that way.

During the day
there is a busy routine that keeps a person going.
Perhaps one drives or walks to work.
All day long the telephone rings, the fax machine clicks away.
Soon it is 5 o'clock.
The day is gone.
Back home. Then supper.
More work or reading.
Then bed-time. Lights out. Time for sleep.
Yet on this night long ago, and for some time before it,
sleep had been a elusive partner for one person in particular.
Nicodemus, one of the most prominent people in Jerusalem
lay awake these nights.
He knew there was something missing in his life.



Nicodemus starts off with a compliment to Jesus:
"We know you are a Teacher come from God,
for no one could do these signs that you do,
unless God was with him."
Jesus had seen him coming, in more ways than one!
"That is not why you are here, Nicodemus.
Let's get right to the heart of your problem.
Except a person is born again,
he or she cannot see the kingdom of God."

Nicodemus had always been a religious person.
A brilliant, highly respected person in the Church.
He had answered Jesus as religious persons often do.
He enjoyed a little chuckle at the same time.
"How can a person be born when he is old?
Can one enter a second time into this mother's womb
and be born all over again?"

Ha! Ha! That was funny.
Jesus wasn't to be thrown off by this response.
He knew exactly what the man was doing.
"You can discuss it forever if you wish.
And that will be as far as it will go."
A discussion,
no matter how much fun,
or how interesting,
or how informative,
always remains just a discussion.
"Dodge the issue if you want to, Nicodemus,"
Jesus said "that is up to you,
but at least know what the issue is.
Don't be surprised when I tell you
that you must be born again."

There is a silence in the conversation.
In the silence both men notice the wind for the first time.
It bent the tree branches. It tugged at their cloaks.
It rattled the window shutters.
"Listen to the wind," said Jesus.
"You can see what it does, you can hear it.
But you can't see where it is coming from.
Nor where it is going. Not really.
So it is with everyone who is born of the spirit of God."

Now then, is that good news?
Is that an encouraging word
for someone seeking fellowship with God?
Does it all depend on God?
Is that what Jesus is saying?
That all we can do is wait?
Wait for the Spirit of God to come to us?
Does it mean that fellowship with God depends on something
over which, like the wind, we have no control?

Is that good news? I don't think so!
Just as we cannot reach out and grasp the wind,
so we cannot reach out and grasp the Spirit of God.
Yet without them both we cannot live. Not really live!
By now Nicodemus wished he had stayed in bed!
He wished this conversation had never taken place.

Jesus is the guarantee
that the winds of God are all around you.
That the spirit of God is within you,
loving and protecting you.
You and I were promised that at our baptism!

This means that God has been with us from the beginning,
individually and as a community of Christian people.
The Spirit of God brought us together this morning.
As we speak and think, the Spirit of God is present with us.
By the way, when did we say this conversation took place?
Was it two thousand years ago between Jesus and Nicodemus?
Yes, no doubt it was.

Did it also take place later on,
between the Church and Synagogue in John's day?
Yes, that is what we believe.
Has it been taking place ever since
within the Church as a Christian community
wherever we happen to be?
Yes, of course. We know that to be true.
Not only within the Christian community in general,
but also within particular persons in the community:
John and Mary, Bill and Susan, anywhere and everywhere.
It takes place whenever and wherever it is
We have our own dark nights of the soul!
Amen

Now retired Rev. Dr. Roy Sheldon Mackenzie lives in Chilliwack, B.C. The Master Preacher, Sermons From John *can be ordered through The Book Room.*



Affirming Christ

Progressive Christians are indulging in the same vanities St. Paul rejected. BY CALVIN BROWN

Now retired, the famous civil rights pastor Bishop John H. Adams in a recent Web article notes that progressive Christianity is not limited to a single theology. Dr. Douglas Ottati of Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, Va., speaks of progressive theology as a conglomeration of theologies, among which are process, liberal, Christian realist, liberationist, feminist, black, womanist and Minjung, a Korean philosophy that is a radical re-interpretation of Christianity. However, while it is named progressive Christianity, it is in no way committed to the traditional creeds and expressions of Christian faith revealed in Scripture. In fact, it is considered a sign of your "maturity" if you leave all that behind and make up your own mind.

Christian heritage and tradition is merely a starting point and the impression from the progressives is that the sooner you move on from it the more enriched in spirituality you will be. Of course, it has great appeal because it reflects completely the "spirit of the age" in which all truth is relative and we are the arbiters of truth. It is a form of neo-Gnosticism (the Gnostics were an early anti-church group that the apostles and early church fathers denounced as being in serious error). Their teaching is that we do not have any authority that has the right to demand our loyalty, including the word of God.

The website for the Canadian Centre for Progressive Christianity lists eight belief points. Number three states: "We are loyal only to our own spiritual conclusions that comes from 'diverse sources of wisdom, regarding all as fallible human expressions open to our evaluation of their potential contribution to our individual and communal lives.' " Point four continues, saying that they "find more meaning in the search for understanding than in the arrival at certainty, in the questions than in the answers."

This is perhaps the greatest distinction between the worldview of the traditional Christian teaching and the resurrected old Gnostic point of view of these progressives.

The evangelical view is found in Living Faith. In Chapter Five ("The Bible") we read:

"The Bible has been given to us by the inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life. It is the standard of all doctrine by which we must test any word that comes to us from church, world, or inner experience. We subject to its judgement all we believe and do. Through the Scriptures the church is bound only to Jesus Christ its King and Head. He is the living Word of God to whom the written word bears witness."

It is important to recognize that an examination of the faith, and even some forms of doubt (see Living Faith 6:2) are a legitimate form of spiritual questing. That is a very long way, however, from saying that the meaning of life is found in the question and not in the answer. This reminds me of the vain philosophies St. Paul rejected in his day. They are vain because, as he said, they are always seeking but never coming to an answer. It is not in the seeking that we find meaning but in Christ who is the YES, in Christ who is the answer—the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

The progressives scold evangelicals for being too sure of their faith, too outdated in their values and out of step with modern understanding, while evangelicals find the progressives' continual questioning of the lordship of Christ, the efficacy of Jesus' atoning death, and the rejecting of the Bible as the final authority for the believer to be disconcerting at best and a dangerous attempt at undermining the faith at worst.

Rev Calvin Brown is the Executive Director of the Renewal Fellowship within the PCC



When Congregations Marry

There are several inter-denominational ministries in our church. BY GWYNETH J. WHILSMITH

Presbyterian and United Churches share a minister? Well, why not?

Seven years ago, members of the United Church in Staffa and the Presbyterian Church at Cromarty, two rural congregations in southwestern Ontario, began a conversation about sharing a minister. After all, the churches were only a mile apart, the members knew each other—some were even related—and they already shared many community activities. Why not share a minister? Especially since both congregations were experiencing shrinking attendance and feeling the financial pinch of employing a full-time minister.

A search committee made up from both congregations sent out a call. When it was answered by Rev. Kathi Urbasik-Hindley, a United Church minister, she was hired to lead both churches, dividing her time 60-40 between them. Urbasik-Hindley says she was excited to receive the call because up until then she had seen the Presbyterian Church only from the outside and looked forward to experiencing it from the inside. "I was delighted with what I found."

Urbasik-Hindley believes "God creates new things out of what we do," and says it was very exciting to be in on the creation of a new thing. She believes where congregations are small, and especially in rural charges, there is a need to find a way to be viable.

Asked why the churches did not choose to close one of the buildings and have one service instead of two, cutting down expenses, she points out that the buildings are historical, having been constructed by pioneers and are also important because of family connections—grandparents helped build the church, and parents were baptized or children married there. Both congregations remain an important presence in the community. And while the United Church and the Presbyterian Church may share theology and liturgies, the members still wanted to have their own services. "Perhaps when the buildings are no longer of great importance, then it may be that one of them will close. Then God will do 'another new thing,'" she says.

"I believe all Christian churches should be under a unity umbrella, not as one denomination but with all denominations co-operating with each other"

Urbasik-Hindley served the two congregations for six years and left on the best of terms. Now, the shared ministry of Staffa and Cromarty is conducted by a Presbyterian minister, Rev. Rob Congram, who was inducted last November. Asked what drew him to the joint ministry, he says, "I've always been open to doing things differently. In one of my other charges there were several former Mennonites in the congregation who shared their experiences and traditions, some of which I was happy to work into the church services."

Since coming to Staffa and Cromarty, Congram says there have been no particular challenges but he is delighted with the high regard and respect the congregations have for each other. He says there is a strong desire to co-operate, with the churches sharing special services such as Christmas Eve and the Christmas concert and working together on other events.

One parishioner leaving the Sunday service was asked if he approved of shared ministry. "Yes, it's good," he says. "I believe all Christian churches should be under a unity umbrella, not as one denomination but with all denominations co-operating with each other."

A similar situation exists in the pretty little bedroom community of Grand Valley, 150 kilometres northwest of Toronto, where Presbyterian Rev. Dr. Ron Archer has for the last two years led shared ministry between Trinity United and Knox Presbyterian. He says it is successful only because both congregations were determined to make it work. They wanted to see the churches sharing and co-operating instead of competing.

It started out tentatively when United Church interim minister Rev. Jan Aylward agreed to devote a quarter of her time to the Presbyterians, who were without a minister. When she completed her interim ministry, the congregations both felt comfortable enough to form a joint search committee with Archer hired as a minister for both churches.

Archer, who trained ecumenically at the Toronto School of Theology, says the main reason he came to Grand Valley was the shared ministry concept. He says leadership must be adaptable and flexible. "I tell the people I care more about your loyalty to a community than about where we might differ theologically. What is important is relationship."

Archer agrees with Urbasik-Hindley that the buildings are valued by the members. "It's their spiritual home, their identity." Both churches hold their own services every Sunday morning. The Presbyterian building is 135 years old while the United Church was built about 20 years ago after a tornado destroyed its 125-year-old edifice. The population is made up largely of retired farmers, with another 40 per cent coming from commuters who travel to Toronto and even further to work.

As good friends June Maycock, clerk of session of Knox, and Luella Montgomery, member of the official board to Trinity, talk over a cup of coffee, Maycock muses about the future. "As the years go by and more newcomers attend our churches, the buildings mean little to them so I can see the day when the congregations may want to share one building. But until then, shared ministry works just fine for us."

Shared ministry is not a new thing! Back in 1946, the United and Presbyterian churches in Inverness, Quebec, formed a co-operative. A few years later, the United Church building was closed but its pews and other furnishings were moved into the Presbyterian church where the congregations hold their joint services. It is known as St. Andrew's, with neither Presbyterian nor United attached. Lorraine Leirmouth, a Presbyterian member, says, "It's worked so well for us all these years, we no longer give it a second thought."

In the early 1980s, two other United churches, one at Thetford Mines and the other at Kinnear's Mills, joined the co-operative, making it a three-point charge. Presbyterian Rev. Ross Davidson conducted services for all congregations, but he admits he stayed away from controversial subjects. "If you bring goodwill and always try to be fair, shared ministry can work well."

In Quebec, the reasons for shared ministry are much the same as other places: small numbers, rural or isolated communities, everyone already working together in schools and lodges, etc. There is another reason in Quebec, however: language. Ross says, "Anglophones feel isolated and the English language plays an important role in co-operative ministry."

Back in Grand Valley, Archer ponders the question of shared ministry. "Unlike 1925, when the Presbyterian and Methodist churches became the same United Church of Canada, in 2007 the churches keep their identity while united in ministry. It's kind of like a marriage where each spouse remains who they always were but live together in a partnership. Shared ministry is a marriage of two denominations."

Conrad Grebel University College



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A Time of Respite

Summer is wonderful, if you prioritize it well. BY LISA M. PETSCHE

For many of us, summer, that much-anticipated season of warmth and light we're entering, is all too brief. Naturally, we'd like to savour it as much as possible. In order to really do so, though, we need to depart from our usual habits and routines.

Indeed, many families plan a summer vacation, which typically involves taking a road trip, renting a cottage or going camping.

The word "vacation" originally referred to upper-class people's practice of "moving to a summer home for part of the year, leaving their usual family home vacant." (Wikipedia)

Today it has a broader meaning: "a time of respite from something." (Webster's) That something could be a paying job or other responsibilities, daily routines, other people, city noise and smog or the complexities of modern life—especially the demands of technology.

The purpose of respite is to refresh us physically, mentally and spiritually, the change of pace—and often environment—renewing our energy and restoring our perspective. When practiced regularly, respite helps keep life's inevitable stresses manageable, preventing burnout—a common phenomenon manifested by physical health problems or such emotional symptoms as frequent irritation by small annoyances and feeling overwhelmed.

Opinions vary as to what constitutes a great vacation. Our goal might be rest and relaxation at home; getting back to basics and spending time in nature; being pampered in a luxurious setting; engaging in adventure; or spending quality time with loved ones.

When practiced regularly, respite helps keep life's inevitable stresses manageable, preventing burnout

Despite the benefits of such respite, vacation deprivation—foregoing some or all of the workplace vacation days allotted to us—is becoming an increasingly common phenomenon.

How absurd is this? Who wouldn't want to take a break from work? Surely we're aware of the importance of time away in order to recharge our batteries.

Yet it's easy to get so caught up in the busyness of everyday life that we can't conceive of retreating from the rat race. We may not even realize how *continued on page 37* ▸



A Good Thing

A controversial institution is recalled fondly by one who worked there. BY GLORIA WASACASE

I worked at Cecelia Jeffery Residential School in November 1959 as a counsellor. I was assigned to the senior girls (ages 12-17); there were about 25-30 in the group. We were located on the second-floor dormitory and the junior girls were on the third floor. This was the same arrangement for the boys' side of the school.

Cecelia Jeffery opened in January 1902 on land at Shoal Lake which the Women's Foreign Missionary Society had bought from the Province of Ontario. It was named after Mrs. Cecelia Jeffery, the first secretary of the Presbyterian Church's Foreign Missionary Society. In 1929, the federal government built a new residential school in Kenora, Ont. In 1961, some of the students went off to the public schools in the area, but before this, they were educated at the residential school.

That September morning in 1961 was very traumatic for everyone: our students, the bus driver, the teachers and the non-native students. The children of Cecelia Jeffery had never been on the same bus or even in the same classroom as non-native students before.

One of the happiest moments was picking out the new clothes – trying to find just the right skirt, blouse or sweater for the first day of a new school. The excitement was so great, it took until after the Christmas holidays for the students to settle down into their new routine.

There was more space in Cecelia Jeffery with the empty classrooms. The senior girls received a bigger room because of this. They had more room to do homework, watch TV or even do girly things. When I first arrived there, the girls were always asking for bread wrappers (wax paper) to curl their hair. We bought clips and bobby pins and other hair accessories for the older girls. What a difference it made to them. This was very important to the older girls. No more bread wrappers!

I often didn't know who was harder to handle: the students or the staff

I remember a junior girl who arrived at Cecelia Jeffery with beautiful long black hair. It was school policy to cut the junior girls' hair short since it was easier to maintain. But in this case the senior girls approached me and asked if I would keep the girl's hair long and they would be the ones to look after her. They did just that.

My final days at the school were in 1969. I was then the matron, my husband was the principal and our family lived at the school. My younger sister was there at one time and she and her husband also met at CJ. They were both counsellors. I often didn't know who was harder to handle: the students or the staff.

With great sadness, I have to tell you that Cecelia Jeffery was eventually no longer needed as a student residence. It closed in 1975. The building was taken down in 1979-80. For me, the school was a good thing. Children need to be educated and the residential schools allowed them an education. Without the school, they would not have had that. Education was only a small part of life in the school. The staff tried to understand the needs of the children, love them and wanted only the same things their parents wanted by sending their precious children there. That said, I am so thankful that reserves have their own schools now, so children may stay at home with their families.

Gloria Wasacase is retired and lives in Brantford, Ont.

How are Presbyterians Giving?

BY PETER BUSH



A major shift in giving practices has taken place over the last 10 years

Presbyterian congregations in Canada have almost doubled their givings to missions over the last 20 years. In 1985, according to data reported in the Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly, Presbyterian congregations gave $9.5 million to missions (General Assembly budget, as Presbyterians Sharing was called at the time, Other Benevolences, and Women's Missionary Society/Atlantic Mission Society). In 2005, Presbyterian congregations reported giving $18.5 million to missions. What is striking about this $9-million increase is that $6 million went to Other Benevolences, to mission projects and initiatives outside the national church budget. Other Benevolences includes local food banks, Presbyterian World Service and Development, interdenominational mission efforts, congregational short-term mission projects, and so on.

From 1985 to 1996, givings to Presbyterians Sharing and to Other Benevolences grew at almost the same rate, increasing approximately 30 per cent. Twice as much money went to Presbyterians Sharing as went to Other Benevolences. The last year that givings to Other Benevolences were less than half of what was given to Presbyterians Sharing was 1997. Since 1997, congregational givings to Presbyterians Sharing have risen by two per cent and congregational givings to Other Benevolences have more than doubled, growing 110 per cent. It is true that the 2005 figures are skewed by the outpouring of support for the victims of the tsunami. But the fact remains that 2005 was the first time the amount given to Other Benevolences surpassed the amount given to Presbyterians Sharing.

While it is easy to get lost in the numbers, one thing is clear: a major shift in giving practices has taken place over the last 10 years. Individuals and congregations are prepared to dig ever deeper to give to Other Benevolences, while their giving to Presbyterians Sharing remains virtually unchanged year after year. Why?

First, Other Benevolences are often mission endeavours that allow donors to connect their giving to specific people, programs and projects. They can visualize who will benefit directly from their gift. Giving to Presbyterians Sharing does not allow that direct connection to occur since donations go into a centralized fund and are then distributed to various programs and projects. It is not possible to connect my gift with a specific person or project.

Second, local church leaders who the donors know and trust select congregationally chosen missions. Giving to these projects is rooted in trusting the locally known leadership to make wise choices about projects to be supported. Presbyterians Sharing donations are sent to unknown leaders who are removed from the local congregation. The projects and programs are nationally chosen and local communities of faith feel they have little or no influence in deciding what their money will be used for.

Third, recent research indicates that holding open a wide variety of giving options results in people giving more. This goes against the old adage, "People rob Peter to pay Paul." In fact, what happens is that people give to both Peter and Paul, giving more in total. Congregational giving to Other Benevolences follows precisely this idea, presenting a wide variety of projects for congregational members to support. Presbyterians Sharing, on the other hand, is a single giving door, offering only one way for people to give to the national church's projects and programs.

The system of using a unified denominational budget and centralized funding within The Presbyterian Church in Canada was adopted in 1912. This was a model that made sense at the time. The figures reported in A&P over the last 10 years clearly indicate that the giving patterns which held true through most of the twentieth century have fundamentally changed. People are ready to give—that has not changed. What has changed is the types of projects and programs they will give to and the expectations they have in giving. The challenge is to open giving opportunities that are sensitive to the giving practices of today.

Rev. Peter Bush is a teaching elder at Knox, Mitchell, Ont. He recently co-authored Where 20 or 30 are Gathered: Leading Worship in the Small Church *with Christine O'Reilly. This is the last of a series.*



A Huge Impact

Three people prove you can do a lot with very little. BY JENNIFER HIGGS

Giving just a little can help others in a significant way. These three church members thought of an idea, and with the support of their congregations were able to share their care and talent across distances.

A growing experience

When Bob McDonald finished college, he embarked on a life-changing experience. In 1970, fresh from completing an agricultural technology diploma, McDonald journeyed to Ghana. He had applied to work for several church organizations closer to his hometown in Glencoe, Ont., but found volunteer work through CUSO —a Canadian global social justice organization.

He admits he had to check on a map to find the location of the small African country, and was unsure what to expect of his first trip away from home. "Once I got there, I just loved the country and I loved the people, and I really liked the work," he says.

In the isolated northern part of the country where McDonald worked, the climate was extremely hot and the two seasons were rainy or dry. A Catholic mission sponsored his work, and he attended a Presbyterian church. "I ended up spending two more years there, and

"I've got projects in the back of my mind that I saw this time when I went back that can be done. Not huge projects, but small-scale projects, and I would love to go back and get those going"

my heart has been there for the last 35 years," he says.

For two years, McDonald helped work on small-scale projects to aid local agriculture by introducing plows, improving seed, promoting better chicken varieties and explaining methods to grow gardens in the dry season.

The most enjoyable part of the trip was working with others. "They are just incredible, happy people," says McDonald.

In the 1980s, he started working with the local chapter of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

"I realized that there were other things we could do in Canada to help people in the Third World countries and I got involved with the Presbyterians Sharing part of our church," he says.

In 2005, McDonald had the opportunity to return to Ghana when his youngest daughter was studying at a university in Accra. Rev. Theresa McDonald-Lee, one of his three daughters (and minister in Moncton) accompanied her father on the trip along with her husband.

McDonald's church in Glencoe supported a Change for Change fundraiser to buy soccer balls for schools in Ghana. "They needed something like that because they love playing soccer," he says. "Ghana is soccer-crazy."

McDonald saw the kids' happy response to the project when he delivered the 23 soccer balls to rural schools without equipment. He revisited the communities where he had worked and recognized some gardens still in use and noted changes in the urban landscape. "In some ways it was totally shocking, and in other ways it was what we expected."

Working on the family farm in Glencoe, McDonald anticipates his next trip to Ghana. "I've got projects in the back of my mind that I saw this time when I went back that can be done. Not huge projects, but small-scale projects, and I would love to go back and get those going.

"Sometimes it doesn't take a huge amount of money to have a huge impact on people who have very little."

Faraway friends

Anna McCoskery has never visited Myanmar (Burma), but she has helped a small village undergo significant changes. A member of West Adelaide, Kerwood, Ont., McCoskery was a delegate to Hungary for the World Alliance of Reformed Churches in 1997. Over lunch, she met Rev. Vahnei, a minister with the Mara Evangelical Church in Myanmar. He told her of his 10-day trek travelling by foot, rafts, and rowboats until he boarded a plane in Bangkok. "It was just fascinating," she says. She kept in touch with him, and as president of the Sarnia WMS Presbyterial, McCoskery invited Vahnei to visit her in Canada and share his story.

People who met Vahnei and learned about his life were shocked to hear the oppressive conditions under Myanmar's military government. People live at a subsistence level, lacking water supply, health services, roads, electricity and mail service. Soldiers can visit the villages at any time and confiscate everything.

McCoskery and the West Adelaide congregation raised $1,000 with which the people of Pasei set up a gravity water system, purchasing plastic water pipe and cement. Women and children had previously spent two hours at night travelling up the mountain for fresh water. The gravity water system brings the water to a holding tank at the bottom of the mountain. Money left over from the water system allowed the villagers to buy a used rice-grinding machine and funds were forwarded to two other villages for their own water systems.

Loans were made to help women start small businesses, treated mosquito nets were provided for a small cost, water projects were started in other villages, and four women began nursing training

Vahnei said the water system increased villagers' sense of self-worth and of being cared for by others. "It's just amazing what that man [Vahnei] does," says McCoskery, "He can stretch a dollar farther than anybody I know."

McCoskery englarged photos sent to her by the villagers and toured the "water story" to several churches and nearby presbyteries. "People were just fascinated," she says. "They couldn't believe what life was like there." More donations were sent to help with a variety of projects. Loans were made to help women start small businesses, treated mosquito nets were provided for a small cost, water projects were started in other villages, and four women began nursing training.

In 2007, the Mara Evangelical Church will celebrate its Centennial of Christianity. With the help of artist Eileen Wilson, McCoskery sent a silk banner to symbolize the friendship between the Mara Christians and Canadians.

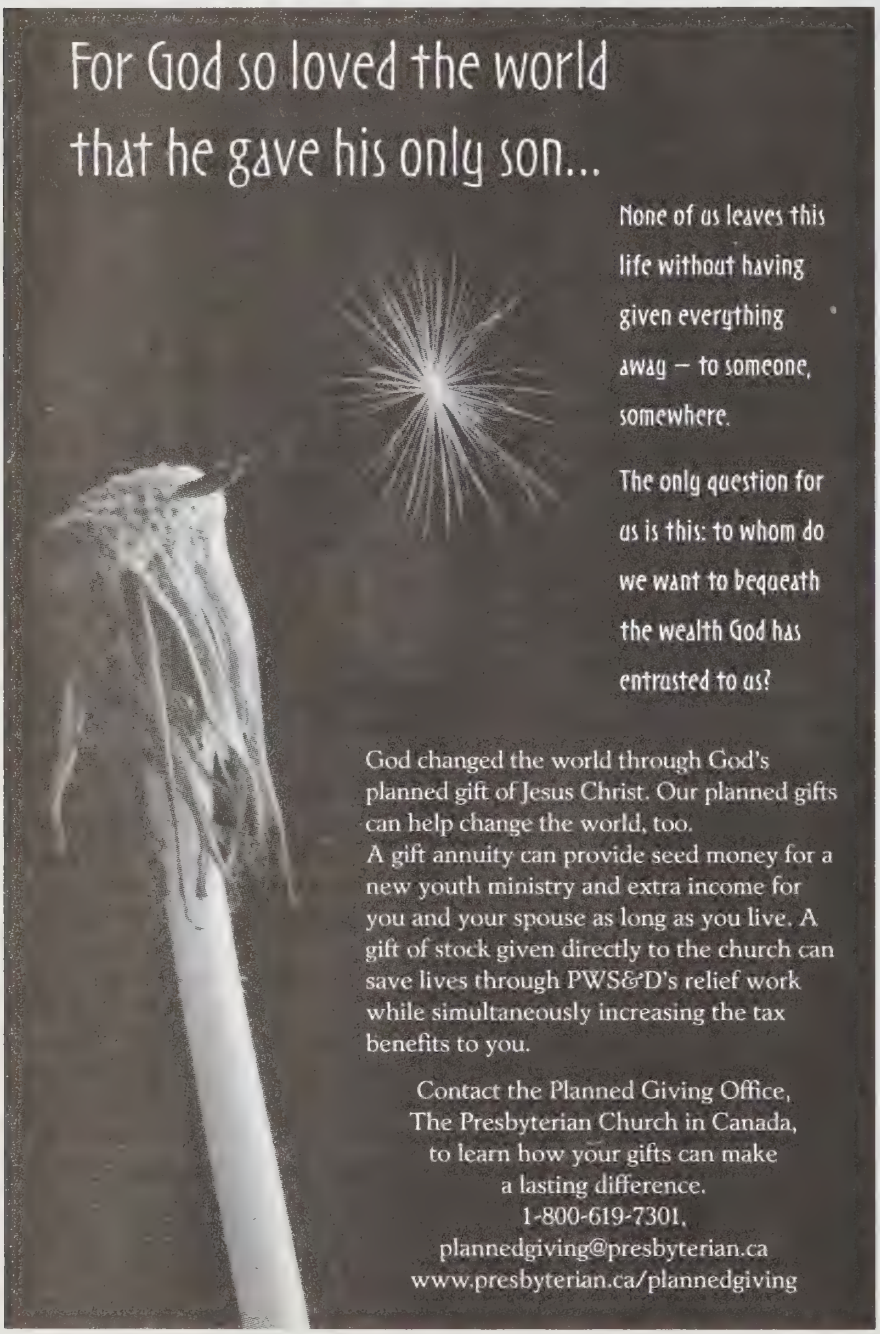
Though McCoskery says it would be too dangerous ▶

People were shocked to hear the oppressive conditions under Myanmar's military government. People live at a subsistence level, and soldiers can visit the villages at any time and confiscate everything

for her to travel there, she plans to continue her friendship with the people of Myanmar. In the basement of her church, village maps, photos and stories are on display.

McCoskery has travelled and worked overseas. A retired teacher, she says she enjoys attending conferences and meeting new people.

"I'm making a bit of a difference for them," she says. "Not a lot, but a bit."



Comforting quilts

In Winnipeg, Helen Smith turned a hobby into helping hundreds of children have a warmer winter. Six years ago, she heard about the Linus Project, which provides homemade blankets to underprivileged children and children in crisis. Smith decided to start a Winnipeg chapter.

"It seemed like such a good thing to do," she says. She suggested the idea to a couple of other women from St. Andrew's who were already in a quilting group, and the work began. Every Wednesday morning, Smith hosted the quilters at her house. "My basement was always in a mess, with quilting all over the place," she says.

People donated quilts to her from across the province, including one Catholic group who made over 400 blankets. The unique blankets are quilted, knitted or crocheted in various colours

People donated quilts to her from across the province, including one Catholic group who made over 400 blankets

and patterns. Sown into each blanket is a Linus tag with a picture of the Charlie Brown character carrying his security blanket and the words "Made with tender loving care for Project Linus."

The blankets were delivered to children in need in Manitoba. Some were sent to women's shelters, the Ronald McDonald house, children living in poverty, the Aboriginal centre and children's hospitals.

A retired nurse and mother of five children, Smith says there is satisfaction in helping others and making kids happy. With more than 2,800 blankets distributed, Smith handed the project over to a new organizer at the end of 2005. "I'm a little too old now," says the 84-year-old with a laugh, "for running around in my car all over."

Jennifer Higgs is a freelance writer.

SABBATH continued from page 31

long it's been since we've taken a break. Or we may perceive we don't have the time or financial resources to properly plan and implement the "ideal" vacation. (Such perfectionism is a common cause of burnout.)

Some of us, too, mistakenly believe that we are indispensable, particularly in our workplace.

Others among us are reluctant to use allotted days because we believe co-workers would disapprove of our temporary absence, regarding it as inconsiderate and perhaps even disloyal, or that the benefits of time off would be negated by the backlog of work we'd subsequently have to contend with.

Allowing ourselves to reach the point of running on empty before we take a vacation is another common lapse in judgment. Ideally, respite involves prevention of, not recovery from, burnout. Making it a habit, as well as using our vacation days in blocks of time, rather than taking one or two here and there, allows us to reap maximum benefits.

Even if we take advantage of all our vacation time, we're challenged in today's highly technological culture with unplugging from laptop computers, cell phones and other electronic devices we've become dependent on.

Physically getting away from it all is no longer enough—we must literally disconnect. Leaving behind all potential distractions and stressors is the only way to ensure we're able to unwind and have fun. For some of us this requires considerable resolve, but the rewards are worth it.

Some of us, too, mistakenly believe that we are indispensable, particularly in our workplace

Arranging regular vacations that are truly meaningful—that is, tailored to our particular needs, whether that means quiet and solitude or adventure and excitement—enables us to better manage workplace demands.

Spin-offs include being better able to attend to loved ones' and our own personal needs, including those of a spiritual nature.

When we take time for ourselves, we become more positive and energetic people. It all comes down to balancing priorities.

Here's wishing you a refreshing summer vacation, whatever form of time-out you choose.

Lisa M. Petsche is a clinical social worker based in Hamilton, Ont.

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Mission, Evangelism and Growth in Eastern Han-Ca

Vibrant outreach continues as Koreans struggle to find a place in national church.

BY AMY MACLACHLAN

Though the wider church may know little about the Eastern Han-Ca Presbytery, the presbytery's members are eager to connect to other congregations and share their enthusiasm, projects and ministry with the national church.

"We all try to have English ministry," said Rev. In Kee Kim, minister at St. Timothy's, Toronto. "But we don't have enough younger adults who speak English. At St. Timothy's, we have three services—bilingual, Korean and English. We also have a communion and praise service that is in English. I think this trend will continue, because ultimately, we need to reach out beyond our own community."

The Presbytery of Eastern Han-Ca (along with its Western counterpart) was created in 1997 after a multi-step process spanning several General Assemblies. The petition to create Han-Ca actually came to the 1995 assembly. A committee was struck to discuss the possibility, and later, a remit under the Barrier Act was sent down to presbyteries to make the change. Even after the Korean congregations got the go-ahead in 1997, the assembly instituted a five-year probationary period, with a report expected after three years. The assembly heard the report in 2002, and although concerns were expressed (such as feelings of isolation, lack of support from the wider church, lack of knowledge about church polity, a disconnect between first- and second-generation Koreans, and the role of women—all of which were evident before creating Han-Ca), the church decided to allow Han-Ca presbyteries to exist indefinitely. To ensure that concerns are not forgotten, assembly agreed to strike another committee at the 2010 assembly, which will report two years later on how the Han-Ca presbyteries and the entire church have acted on these issues.

"There was a huge celebration," said Kim, speaking of the day when the motion passed. Kim was intimately involved in the entire Han-Ca creation process. "We didn't think it would pass."

Since that day, while strides have been made in some areas, the presbytery struggles with creating connections with the wider church—and the church has struggled with how to include its Korean-Canadian members. At last year's assembly, several commissioners did not attend, sparking angst on both sides.

"A lot of people have a misunderstanding of Han-Ca. They see it as separation," said Kim. "For more than 30 years, it had been a part of the English-speaking presbyteries. But only about 10 to 20 per cent actually participated in their presbyteries. They had no clue; it's a totally different community."

"When the idea came up to create Han-Ca, a lot of concerns were raised, but none were raised for 30 years before that! It's a very interesting phenomenon"

Creating the Han-Ca ("Korean-Canadian") presbyteries gave Koreans a place to meet where language and culture were mostly uniform. With that in place, Kim said the first task was to teach members about church polity.

"Congregation members didn't know they were part of a presbytery. They didn't know the Book of Forms. They didn't know they were governed by it," he said. "The congregations were even separated from each other. We wanted the presbytery to be able to bring us together, to be united, to be connected."

Now, he said, participation at presbytery is 100 per cent, and the Book of Forms is followed. "And the congregations are connected. One's problems and issues become our problems and issues. United life is the exercise.

"Our next issue is, how can we be connected further with the larger body of this church? We're praying about it and reflecting on it."

Some would argue that the insular environment that ensued with



The congregation of St. Timothy's, Toronto, is a close-knit group, enjoying retreats together, and celebrating special events such as Kwansa installation, where women aged 45 and over are installed as unordained, elected officers who serve the church, especially by visiting infirm members.





the presbytery's creation, in some ways, exacerbated the problems.

"People come to feel secure, safe and comfortable, and once they find that, they don't want to come out," said Rev. Cheol Soon Park, presbytery clerk and minister at Toronto Korean. "So we're encouraging them to interact with other congregations and to be exposed to broader aspects of Canadian society so they learn, grow and contribute. We try to push them into the field, but it's not an easy task."

Issues around communication were on full display at last year's General Assembly, when several commissioners from the presbytery failed to show up. Commissioners on the floor expressed disapproval for the apparent lack of reverence for the church's annual proceedings. A letter arrived the next day, explaining their absence. It said the elders who failed to attend were first-generation immigrants and were not able to be away from their businesses for more than one or two days at a time. "It is hard to find people with willing hearts," stated the letter. "I will try again next year, and hope to find those who are willing to participate."

A miffed assembly voted to record "its disappointment and dismay that seven of the 10 commissioners from the Presbytery of Eastern Han-Ca were not present for the deliberations and work of the assembly." The moderator was also instructed to write a letter to the presbytery reminding the absent commissioners that "they failed to uphold their responsibilities to take part in the church's decision-making."

As a result, a motion was passed to have Korean translation available at all future assemblies, beginning in 2007.

The incident at assembly was a poignant reminder of the divide between Eastern Han-Ca and The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

"Korean congregations have largely been ignored," said Kim, of the church's response to the Korean church before Han-Ca was created. "There was no issue made that Korean congregations did not participate in presbytery. When the idea came up to create Han-Ca, a lot of concerns were raised, but none were raised for 30 years before that! It's a very interesting phenomenon."

Despite the absence of ties to the larger church, Han-Ca East is heavily involved in mission and ministry in Canada and abroad.

The Korean Family Ministry began in 1988 by a group of Christians who wanted to reach out. It is now run by Rev. Myung Chun Kim, who visits seniors' homes in the Toronto area to hold worship services, make personal visits, and even to bring authentic Korean food to those longing for traditional dishes. Although it began as a mission of the PCC, the program became incorporated as a non-profit organization by the Ontario government in January.

The presbytery also has two mission congregations—a testament to its passion for planting new churches. The church in Nova Scotia serves the Korean population there, who previously had no Korean church to attend. A young minister was sent last year, and according to Kim, the congregation is growing rapidly.

The presbytery as a whole also supports various mission projects in Nicaragua, North Korea, China and South Africa, supports three overseas missionaries, and each congregation has its own mission projects and programs.

Kim travelled to Madagascar in February to continue a partnership that began last year. He established a connection with pastors and seminary students there, holding seminars for them. His congregation is also supporting the beginnings of a church in Kazakhstan. The project began with evangelism and Bible study, followed by several members travelling there for a mission trip, and culminating in the purchase of a building for the new congregation.

But even when it comes to mission, there is conflict between this presbytery and the national denomination. The presbytery's givings to Presbyterians Sharing are regularly below required amounts; but this doesn't mean that Han-Ca East's congregations aren't donating time and money to mission.

"Korean churches do not find projects in the PCC that suit their focus and needs," said Kim, noting that many Han-Ca congregations are more conservative and evangelical than the rest of the church, giving them a more traditional understanding of mission. "But we do spend a lot of money on our own missions. Koreans get involved in mission projects outside the PCC."

Kim said International Ministries is an area that the Korean church can participate in because every Korean congregation has international ministries of their own. "How do we bring the two together and let the church know we're giving a lot of money to these projects?" asked Kim.

"The PCC shied away from establishing churches through mission," he continued. "They work with local partners and do projects, but Han-Ca's main focus is building churches."

The Korean church also has a history of ministry with Aboriginal peoples. St. Timothy's has been meeting with the Rocky Bay First Nation for about three years, visiting the reserve to hold vacation Bible schools. The congregation also sent a member on the Mistawasis youth mission trip held yearly through Youth in Mission.

Kim said that generally speaking, the Korean church has a good understanding of the feelings of isolation and segregation felt by many native people, "so when we go to a reserve, they look at us as one of them. They don't see us as being connected to the Presbyterian Church, so it's easier for us to be connected with them."

Several congregations were also involved in MissionFest, held in Toronto in March. The huge conference is dedicated to inspiring, encouraging and educating people for mission. Several Korean congregations either helped to sponsor the event or were exhibitors. It's through events like this that the presbytery is trying to use its many ministers who are in their 40s to help attract younger and English-speaking Koreans, as well as build bridges between the English- and Korean-speaking worlds.

And though there are issues surrounding the place of women in the presbytery, a strong women's group exists. The Korean Women's Association is a member of the Women's Missionary Society, and also functions as a committee within the Han-Ca Presbytery. It is an association of all the women's groups in the Han-Ca congregations, is Korean-speaking, and both Han-Ca East and West have branches of this association within their presbyteries. Among other things, they focus on mission as well as leadership development among both clergy and the laity.

Supporting women leaders—and educating traditional Korean congregations on the roles women can and should play—is a key priority for the presbytery, according to Park. "We are still working on it," he said. "We called two women ministers in our congregation, and they are first-generation Korean immigrants. This is a new beginning, and I hope in the near future, we'll have women elders in the congregations."

Despite difficulties, the presbytery must be doing something right. Since 1998 (the first year that near-complete figures are available), Han-Ca East has grown from 979 members, 803 in attendance, and 270 adherents, to about 5,000 members and those in attendance, and nearly 4,000 adherents.

Park said his congregation is currently celebrating 40 years as part of the Presbyterian Church. With 12 paid staff, and talk of building an extension, Toronto Korean is shooting for growth. "We're in wonderful shape," said Park. "We're concentrating on building a secure ministry team, training young leaders, setting up new missionary appointments, and helping new Korean immigrants settle into the community."

With such potential for growth, one wonders what the future will hold.

"My wish," said Kim, "is that we would all be connected, that all the barriers would be broken, and that we will be one body."

This is the final profile of the church's 46 presbyteries. To view them online, visit our website at www.presbyterianrecord.ca

EASTERN HAN-CA BY THE NUMBERS

(2004/05 figures)

Charges: **17 (all single-point)**

Vacancies: **0**

Members: **4,935** (2005), **4,150** (2004)

Attendance: **5,054** (2005), **4,496** (2004)

Adherents: **3,795** (2005), **2,136** (2004)

Largest congregations by members: **Toronto Korean (1,127), Vaughan Community (982), Westside Community, Mississauga (626)**

Largest congregations by attendance: **Toronto Korean (1,160), Westside, Mississauga (850), Vaughan Community (840)**

Largest congregations by adherents: **Westside, Mississauga (905), Westside Community, Mississauga (821), Toronto Korean (424)**

Areas covered: **Montreal, Toronto, Thornhill, Brantford, Chatham, Kitchener, London, Niagara Falls, Mississauga**

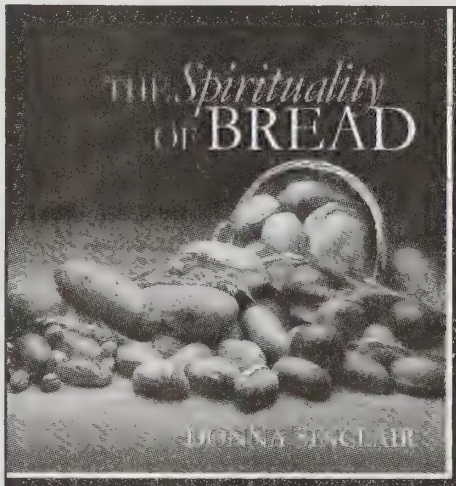
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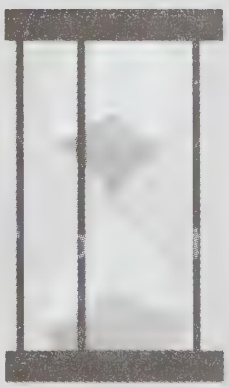
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Welcome to Whine Country

A chronic complainer learns to give thanks after getting a cold drink on a hot day.

BY PHIL CALLAWAY



I am a chronic complainer. I grumble. I gripe. I have grievances. Sometimes my whining gets on my wife's nerves. She says, "You should quit whining, Phil." But I tell her, "I don't like your tone of voice, Sweetie, it's beginning to bother me." These are the things I have found myself complaining about lately:

- The water from our tap. It leaves smudges on our cups.
- Why I have to follow my teenagers around the house shutting off lights. It's a full-time job.
- Long waits in doctor's offices with mediocre reading material.
- The weather, which includes snow in mid-September.
- Why the garbage truck never comes on time.
- Why all four wheels on my shopping cart go in opposite directions.
- Having to make the bed when I'm the last one out of it.

In the midst of my whining, something happened. Our family took a trip to a Third World country. We went with Compassion, a truly Christian child development agency whose motto is "Releasing children from poverty in Jesus' name." While we were there, God hit me with the shallowness of my outlook on life.

The vast majority of these kids don't stand at the fridge wondering what's for supper. There is no fridge. There is no supper.

We stood in a village that a hurricane had completely levelled. Except for a church and the Compassion building. They told me the miraculous story with faces beaming. Yes, they'd lost everything. Yes, their homes had blown away. But the church was still standing.

On the day we visited our sponsored child Carlos, the temperature was almost unbearable and we ran out of bottled water. Never in my short life had I experienced such raging thirst. Suddenly Carlos' stepmother pulled from a small icebox the greatest gift imaginable: an ice-cold bottle of fizzy pop. I ran my fingers over that bottle and giggled like a fourth grader who had just heard the funniest joke imaginable. I held that bottle up to the light then sipped it slowly, relishing every single drop as they crawled one by one down my eager throat. This drink was nectar straight from heaven. This drink was a companion and a friend and a teacher. It taught me a glorious secret to the joyful Christian life: give thanks for each and every blessing while we hold it in our hand.

On the long flight home, I wrote a list of things I'm thankful for now that we've been to the developing world:

- Water that comes out of a tap. Clean cups to drink it with.
- Lights in the house. Even if they're on too much.
- Waiting for the doctor in a waiting room complete with leather sofas, an aquarium, and hope.
- Snow in September. I'd golf all year in a warm climate and my wife just might consider murder.
- Garbage dumps outside our cities. The truck may not be on time, but at least we don't share sidewalk space with the garbage year-round.
- Shopping carts and grocery stores crammed with food. In my entire life, I don't think I've ever had to literally go to bed hungry.
- Not having to plug my nose. The assault on my nasal passages as we travelled through some of these communities was unbearable.
- A place to sleep tonight.

Things still happen throughout my day that push my "whine" button. But more and more I'm learning to stop myself in mid-whine and let that whining give way to thanksgiving. This morning as I looked into the mirror, I found myself giving thanks for a comb and a toothbrush. Even if I only need one of them.

Phil is an award-winning author and a popular speaker. Visit him at www.philcallaway.com



Imitating Prey

Stop acting and sounding like a spiritual bunny. BY DAVID WEBBER

Today is my day off and it snowed this morning, almost a foot in some places. Disgusted, I went to work. After lunch the snow stopped and I decided to leave the office and see if I could salvage the remains of the day. I went home, grabbed my field glasses, my rambling rifle and the rest of my field kit.

A half-hour drive found me poking around the forested edge of a delightful meadow, creek and slough complex. The snow was mostly melted from the meadow, although there was still up to six inches of the wet stuff under the forest canopy. Every species of wildlife seemed to be out investigating the aftermath of the freak spring snowstorm. I spent a wonderful afternoon poking around like an old bear. And then I bumped into one.

The bruin was a she-bear, black, modest in size and obviously advanced in years. From about 150 metres away I watched through my binoculars as she flipped over a dried cow flop and dabbed up the dung beetles with her tongue. As she bumbled around she didn't have a clue I was giving her the eye, or at the very least, didn't care. I was almost back to the pickup truck, so I wandered over and deposited the rifle and my daypack on the front seat and quietly closed the door. I sat on the ground about a dozen metres away from the truck and continued to watch the old bear through my field glasses. Eventually she bumbled back into the forest like a buffoon with black baggy breaches.

I spent a wonderful afternoon poking around like an old bear. And then I bumped into one

Without thinking too much, I reached into my vest pocket, took out my prey imitator call and proceeded to play a short "rabbit in distress" opus on it. I was interested to see if the old she-bear would poke her nose out of the forest again if she thought a rabbit sandwich was in the offing. After a few bars, I sat on the ground and lazily waited. I glassed the forest edge about 200 metres away where the old bear had disappeared. I wasn't really expecting too much to happen.

Suddenly, only 15 metres away, the dense brush to my right shook violently. The old she-bear stomped out directly towards me. Bumbling buffoon had

become purposeful predator. What made this particularly interesting, if not ironic, was that the hunter had suddenly become the hunted, all because the hunter had made the mistake of imitating prey. The bear had taken the rabbit distress call seriously, and since bears are notably myopic, and since fear had kind of frozen my fanny to the ground, the old she-bear was convinced that the mound on the ground before her was really a rather large distressed rabbit. The fact that I had foolishly deposited my rifle in the truck limited my ability to mount any kind of an argument.

Armed only with the rabbit distress call, I jammed it into my mouth and blasted on it as loud as my adrenalin-charged lungs could manage. I was fully inspired and the volume impressed even me. It certainly confused the bear. It also seemed to dissipate the brain-gas that had rendered me inert on my fanny. I suddenly came to my mind, stood up and frantically waved my arms while continuing to squeal as loud as I could on the call. The bear swapped ends and squealed out for the brush. I would like to say that at that moment I really didn't know who was the most frightened, the bear or me. I eventually made it home where I now sit reflecting on how foolish it is to imitate prey in the presence of a massive predator. I learned something today that is important for "bush" survival. Being a Presbyterian, which means every personal experience eventually gets looked at through the lens of the Bible, I also learned something with regards to "spiritual survival."

Speaking about spiritual survival, 1 Peter 5:8 warns: "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." The interesting thing is that not only do I not heed this serious warning in Scripture, I often wander around spiritually imitating prey. I tend to live my life, on one hand drunk with denial of the devil's presence and on the other hand tempting him by acting like easy quarry. 1 Peter says, "sober up" and "resist."

For me, this means: Stop foolishly denying the presence of evil and the evil one. Stop acting and sounding like a spiritual bunny when the truth is that in Christ I am made spiritually strong. Stop cloaking myself with any kind of evil or unrighteousness that attracts the devil like dung attracts flies. Stop letting doubt rule in my life. Stop limiting the effect of salvation in my living, when salvation means I really am a child of God. Stop ignoring the powerful Word of God collecting dust on my nightstand. Stop ignoring the need for prayer power in my life. The apostle Paul puts all of this in the affirmative as he advises the Ephesians: "Stand your ground, putting on the sturdy belt of truth and the body

"Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour"

armour of God's righteousness. For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News, so that you will be fully prepared. In every battle you will need faith as your shield to stop the fiery arrows aimed at you by Satan. Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Pray at all times and on every occasion in the power of the Holy Spirit. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all Christians everywhere."

Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the Record. *He is minister of the Cariboo, B.C. house church ministry. His most recent book is* Like a Winter's Aspen: Embracing the Creator's Fire.

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Jul 11, Aug 15, Sep 5 – 8 Days

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Jul 23 – 12 Days

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Aug 21 – 20 Days

BLACK SEA & EGYPTIAN ADVENTURE
Sep 15 – 17 Days

UKRAINIAN WATERWAYS
Sep 25 – 13 Days

ATLANTIC CANADA & COLONIAL AMERICA
Oct 9 – 13 Days

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Honour your father and mother. Then you will live a long, full life in the land the LORD your God will give you. *Exodus 20:12*

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God gave us mothers to take care of us on Earth, while He takes care of us from Heaven. Mother's Day was created to help us honour our mothers.
FILL IN THE BLANKS IN THE PRAYER BELOW, DEDICATED TO YOUR MOTHER.

Mother's Day Prayer

Dear God,

Thank you for my mother. She is so _____

and _____. I like it when she helps me

_____. Help me to show

her how much I _____ her.

Amen

To show your mom how much she means to you, do at least one of the following for her this Mother's Day:

1. Help Daddy prepare her breakfast in bed.
2. Clean up your room.
3. Cut out your Mother's Day prayer below and paste into a homemade Mother's Day card for your mom!

Mothers of the Bible

Unscramble the letters below to reveal three famous Mothers of the Bible:

IMYA

Clue: Mother of Jesus

BEZITLEAH

Clue: Mother of John the Baptist

RHAAS

Clue: Mother of Isaac

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All notices of pulpit vacancies will be charged to the congregation: $40 minimum for one-time insertion or $25 per insertion for four or more. This charge applies to all congregations. Contact the Record office regarding items for this column.

Ministry Opportunities and Interim Moderators

International Ministries is looking to recruit a missionary to serve in Central America, most likely in Guatemala. A committed Christian with a theological education, lay or clergy and preferably able to speak Spanish. Interested candidates should contact Rev. Ron Wallace, Associate Secretary for International Ministries, 416-441-1111 extension 255 or Rwallace@presbyterian.ca.

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Sunny Corner Pastoral Charge, N.B., St. Stephen's, Sunny Corner, St. Paul's, Warwick; Rev. H. Martyn Van Essen, 7 Hierlihy Rd., Tabusintac, NB E9H 1Y5; 506-779-1812; hmvanessen@hotmail.com.

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Pincourt, Que., Ile Perrot; Mark Farrell, Convener, Search Committee, 242 Fifth Ave., Pincourt, QC J7V 5L3; 514-453-4796; markim@ca.inter.net.

Richmond, Ont., St. Andrew's; a call to dynamic, innovative, caring, family-focused ministry; Rev. Dr. Tom Gemmell, 38 Mary Hill Cres., Richmond, ON K0A 2Z0; 613-838-5949; tomgemmell@sympatico.ca.

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West Vancouver, West Vancouver Presbyterian Church; The Rev. R. C. (Bob) Garvin, 12225 Senda Crt., Mission, BC V4S 1B8; garvins@shaw.ca.

OBITUARIES

JACKSON, REVEREND ROBERT ALEXANDER, passed from this life to the next on March 3, 2007, at his home in Winston Park, Kitchener, Ont. Bob, as he was called by his acquaintances, was born in Ballymena, County Antrim, Northern Ireland, on August 13, 1920. He graduated from Queen's University Belfast and studied theology at Trinity College Dublin. He was ordained into the Christian ministry, married and immigrated to Canada in 1949. His first congregation in Canada was St. Cuthbert's, Hamilton, Ont. In his five years with that congregation it grew from a mission charge to a congregation of 300.

Bob was called by the Presbytery of Guelph to Knox's, Galt, in 1954, beginning his ministry there in April. He retired from active ministry in January 1985. During his ministry in this presbytery, Bob was moderator several times, was instrumental in starting St. Giles, Cambridge, Ont., and served on the board of congregational life and the board of world mission of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Bob was also actively involved in the community. He served as president of the Galt Kiwanis Club, president of the South Waterloo District Boy Scouts of Canada and as chairman of the Galt Library Board. He oversaw the building of the present main branch across Queen's Square from Knox, Galt.

Bob believed that spreading the Gospel was central to Christian ministry. To that end, early in his time at Knox, he started the Golden Hour radio ministry Sunday mornings. That program continued under his successors until a change in programming format in 1996 removed it from the air. He organized evangelical conferences with Dr. William Fitch of Knox Church, Toronto, and Dr. Len Evans of Ohio. Bob's evangelical zeal and love of ministry led seven young people to enter into full-time ministry of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Marguerite; children Kennedy of Brampton, Ont., Lynn of St. Agatha, Ont., and Cindy of Kitchener, Ont.; nine grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

SMITH, JOHN EARL, passed away on December 29, 2006, at the age of 60. A life-long and faithful member of Burns Presbyterian Church, Milverton, Ont., John was a successful businessman and partner in the Zehr Insurance Group based in New Hamburg, Ont. John brought the same passion he had for life into his worship and leadership in Burns Church as he was Clerk of Session, like his father and his father before him. John was also an avid vintage car enthusiast and was involved in several antique car associations in Ontario.

Survived by his loving wife of 32 years, Denise, and proud father of three children: Christina and Mike (Sebben), Kimberley, Scott; and granddaughter Isabella. John's compassionate leadership, heartfelt love and devotion will be sadly missed in Burns Church, the Kirk Session and the community.

STANSFIELD, BLAKE, passed away on February 22, 2007. Lifelong member of St. Andrew's, Brampton, Ont., and dedicated elder for 30 years. Blake was Brampton's Santa Claus and he loved and encouraged children and young people all his life. In his dying, Blake's incredible faith and trust in God sustained him and was an example for us all.

STEVENS, WILLIAM E., faithful member and elder of Westminster Presbyterian Church, Calgary, Alta. Passed away peacefully on January 3, 2007. Lovingly remembered as a gentle and caring servant of the Lord.

TENHAAF, WILLIAM, founding member of Parkwood Presbyterian Church, Ottawa, Ont. and active elder 1974-1986, passed away on February 13, 2007.


A visit with the Toronto Formosan Church.

We Care and Share!

Presbyterians continue to reach out in mission. BY WILMA WELSH

When you receive this issue of *The Presbyterian Record*, I will be representing The Presbyterian Church in Canada at the General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan. How exciting it will be for me to visit the church that I served for six years in the early 1970's. I served in Taiwan during a very difficult time; a time when the church was facing political and social persecution. Suffering continues because of Taiwan's position in the world today. I will share news of this visit in my final message in the June issue.

My year as moderator is rapidly drawing to a close. As I reflect on the past 10 months, I do so with excitement and anticipation for the future of the Presbyterian Church. I will admit there are concerns across the Church, but there is also an excitement and for that I thank God.

"Partners in Mission" has been my emphasis as I have visited congregations and groups across the Church. There have been many highlights. A man in a congregation I visited recently told me that he will never again question giving to missions. He is now convinced of the effectiveness of our mission program around the world. He told me that he will happily share in the future.

Mission is not something new—it is our mandate. As Christians we have no choice but to be involved. Christians have been involved in mission, in helping others for hundreds of years. When I look up the word "mission" in the dictionary, I do not find that it is only something that Christians do. Large companies have mission statements—they even use the word "mission" to describe their mandate. Within our Church we continue to journey together with our neighbours, learning and helping each other.

As I think of mission in the church in this millennium, I am reminded about the changes we are seeing in our approach to mission. We are now thinking outside the box. Mission has become something very personal, congregations want hands-on. It is no longer something away out there across the ocean that we just can't even imagine experiencing unless we are called to serve as a missionary. Mission exposure trips have opened the eyes, the ears, and the hearts of our members. Our world has become very small and it is now possible for us to experience first hand the lives of our partners in Canada and around the world. Our partners overseas now know us as people, not only as a church of concerned members across the ocean that send money to help, and occasionally send a missionary.

How are we as a church doing at mission in this new millennium? We are talking more about mission as it relates to justice issues. Our politicians are even talking about environmental issues. What will we have to leave the children of the next generation if we are not good stewards of our natural resources?

We are concerned about water, and how unfair it is that many in the world today drink from murky river beds.

We are concerned about our suffering brothers and sisters around the world, especially those affected by HIV/AIDS. How can we help the young children being raised by grandmothers who struggle daily because they can't afford to feed their grandchildren?

I am constantly reminded how we as a Church can and do make a difference in the lives of many. Let us move forward in mission making a difference in the world. We care and we share.

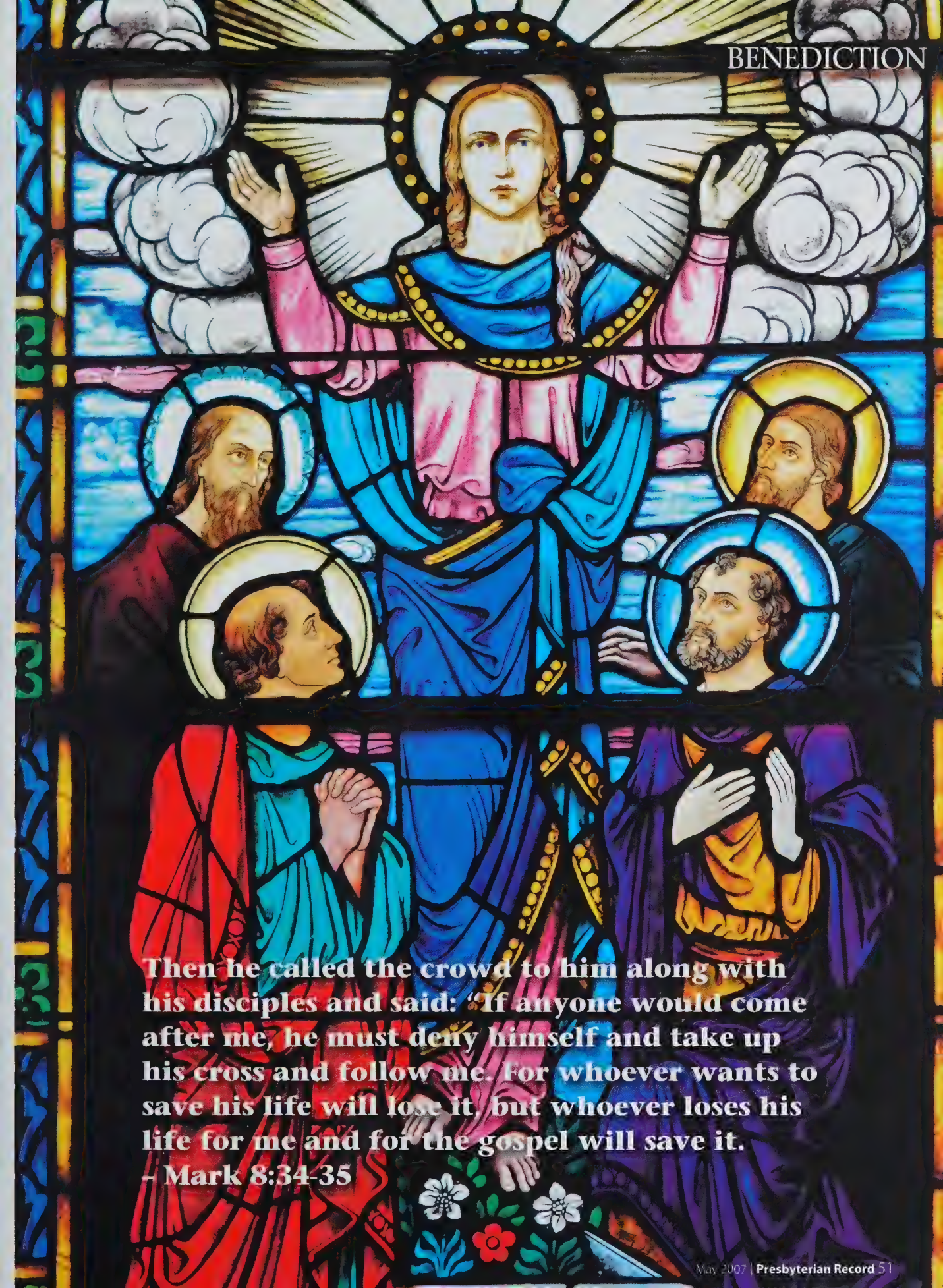
Blessings,



Moderator's Itinerary

May

4	Presbytery of Cape Breton, N.S.
5	AMS Discovery Days, Agritech Centre, Truro, N.S.
6	St. John's, Grimbsy, Ont., 175th anniversary
9	WMS Council meeting, Crieff Hills
13	Presbytery of Miramichi, Dalhousie and Campbellton area
19-20	Knox, Kincardine, Ont.



Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it.
– Mark 8:34-35

MISSION: POSSIBLE



TAIWAN:
Translating the Bible verse by verse

More than four million Hakka people live in Taiwan and very few are Christians. This is primarily because, until recently, the Bible has not been available in their language. Since 1984, the Hakka Bible Translation Team has worked diligently to translate the Bible into Hakka. Rev. Dr. Paul McLean, a PCC missionary, is helping the team to review and revise the entire Old Testament draft translation verse by verse. Your gifts to *Something Extra* help support this important translation work.

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PRESBYTERIAN Record

June 2007

PWS&D Poetry Contest



Summer Book Club

- Challenging Assumptions
- Dealing with Grief
- The Worst Stories Ever Told
- Are the Classics Still Relevant?



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or email file (minimum 300 dpi high quality jpg) to:
record@presbyterianrecord.ca



PRESBYTERIAN
Record



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Summer Book Club

Tasty Morsels for the Soul



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IT TAKES PERSONALITY

Variety can be a good thing.

BY DAVID HARRIS



I recently took a personality indicator test widely used to help people understand themselves and others a bit better. It's the fourth time I've taken one of these, of which there are several different types, in the past 20 or so years. The test is a non-judgemental exercise that places each individual on a grid relative to others giving an indication of preferences for things like, say, whether you get energized from being with others or by yourself or whether you prefer a more orderly life to spontaneity.

For example, while I can schmooze pretty well and love parties, I find both activities require energy. Other people, by contrast, find such gatherings energizing.

Doing this exercise again has been an interesting measure on how much I've changed in a quarter century. Apparently, I have: I used to be disinclined to make hard and fast decisions, but after 20 years in journalism, including 10 at daily newspapers, I've adapted and learned to live with deadlines.

Not surprisingly, the variety of individual personalities is reflected in the institutions we form, including the church. Of course there are other factors as well that delineate approaches to faith, the most common being denominational. However, we have had several stories recently about new approaches to presenting the faith that have nothing to do with denominational distinctions.

Our March cover stories reported on the Fosdick Convocation in New York and in April, we reported on the Emergent Church movement. We are also working on stories about Rick Warren's Purpose Driven church movement based in Willow Creek, Illinois, and copied in many other places, including some Presbyterian churches in Canada.

Sometimes these new movements cause concern, so it's important to remember that differences in style are clearly evident in the New Testament. The personality of the John who wrote the gospel is far more mystical and abstract in approach to Jesus' teachings than say, Peter, who comes across as more concrete and practical.

It would be a tragedy and impoverishment of faith to assume that one or two styles must be right to the exclusion of the others. Just as the preferences we have as individuals contribute to the diversity of humanity, so different ways of presenting the message of the gospel should also be celebrated.

For example, individuals who are drawn towards a church community where right and wrong are more clearly defined are not necessarily fundamentalists. Nor are those who are more open to the Spirit moving in unconventional ways lost souls. God speaks to us in different ways through different means.

Until recent decades, denominations tended to define different approaches to Christianity. One of the results of postmodernity, that the stories we have published reveal, is that denominations are increasingly reflecting more diverse expressions of faith, some of which may even challenge the original tenets of a particular denomination.

So, perhaps "the solution" to the decline mainline denominations are experiencing is to embrace the variety of styles and approaches to worship, teaching and evangelization. If we believe that the diversity in humanity is part of the divine plan, we must also believe that the Spirit moves in ways we do not understand, and we are all called to proclaim God's love to the world and to use our different gifts to bring people closer to God.

There are many resources for churches that want to assess their corporate personality and then reflect on whether that assessment is how they want to be perceived in their community. They may even be challenged to change and grow—just as I am.

***

This winter I enjoyed 10 weeks of parental leave getting to know our new daughter better. I was able to do this in part because of the fantastic team at this magazine. In particular, I am indebted to managing editor Andrew Faiz who competently slipped into the editor's chair and, almost as soon as I returned, slipped right out of the country on assignment to Pakistan and Afghanistan. You can read about his travels and the work of church-sponsored development groups in those countries in future issues.

David Harris

Letters



Spread ethical foods

Re Fair trade not really fair, May

The article from *The Economist* to which a reference is made also states,"The best thing about the spread of the ethical-food movement is that it offers grounds for hope. It sends a signal that there is enormous appetite for change and widespread frustration that governments are not doing enough to preserve the environment, reform world trade or encourage development."

Think globally, act locally. There is no doubt that fair trade is in the interest of small farmers, to pretend otherwise is to give legitimacy to unfair and exploitative world economic trade systems. Fair Trade farmers' groups frequently invest in developing their market knowledge, in building up their export or processing capability, or in diversification programs, all of which require investment. Equally powerful signs of hope lie in the thousands of small victories being won at local levels by producer communities able to invest in processing facilities, better schools, health clinics, clean water, internet access and recycling schemes as a result of selling to fair trade markets. As Raymond Kimaro of the Kilimanjaro Native Co-operative Union commented at the G8 events in Edinburgh: "Pay us a fair price for our coffee, and we will make poverty history for ourselves."

For complete information on fair trade and where to purchase certified fair trade products, go to www.transfair.ca.

GUY SMAGGHE
PRESBYTERIAN WORLD SERVICE & DEVELOPMENT, TORONTO

Ask Why

Re By The Numbers—January, March, April, May

Perhaps it's time for the leadership of The Presbyterian Church in Canada to start asking the tough Why questions. For example, why are a number of Presbyterian churches experiencing stagnation?

Based on Rev. Peter Bush's observations of the data, here are some of my Why questions:

In smaller congregations:
-Why is leadership done by consensus?
-Why does worship style reflect the inside needs of its members?
-Why are "survival" issues always at the forefront?

Why are some congregations experiencing growth?

Why is there not more focus on building community (fellowship)?

Why do we define "normal" models of ministry in such terms as "self-supporting"?

Why doesn't leadership development and training receive more attention by the governing elders?

Asking the tough Why questions should allow leaders to start formulating the driving values of the Church, and values are not to be confused with practices. Far too often, our attention focuses on practices, form, culture, methods, style and traditions; instead of values, essence, message, staples and principles.

Thanks for the kick start Peter.

JOHN MCNEILLY EXETER, ONT.

Passionate prayers

I would like to express appreciation for the deeply sensitive, searching and intelligent prayers offered by Rev. Jean Armstrong on the back of the worship bulletins for

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DR. HANS KOUWENBERG ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

Another excited Christian

Re Wanted Excited Christians, March

I am an excited Christian and the older I get the more excited I get because Christianity is the most hopeful, wonderful good news around. And I'm a traditionalist! In fact, I belong to a church that sounds very much like the little church in a land not so far away in the beautifully written story by Carol Ann Keys.

Forty years ago, presbytery suggested the doors on my church be closed because of low membership. That didn't happen because a few faithful people tried something new, opening only in the summer with Knox College students in the pulpit. That was the bridge that brought us where we are today, open year round with our own minister, a balanced budget and owing no debts. We still don't have a huge congregation but we are "awake" and with God's continual help we carry on.

Recently in London, England I attended the most contemporary church service of my life at an ancient Church of England, which had been stripped of all its furnishings. Instead, there were stacking chairs and a platform up front with a five-piece rock band. Coffee was picked up at a bar and sipped throughout the service (program). All very informal but loud (can't honestly say friendly). No hymn books, we sang choruses from screens hung from the ceiling. And how we sang, on and on, until my knees buckled.

The lively children were called to the front where I expected a story from the minister (sorry, leader), but no, the band struck up and all the kids broke out in a reggae dance which was fun—I think they were praising the Lord. There were Bible readings and inclusive prayers given by attendees and the leader, in casual dress, gave an interesting talk. I know he was the leader and I know it was a talk because the small slip of paper that replaced the bulletin said so.

Certainly I was the oldest person there, the congregation made up of mostly young families and you can't knock that. But as I reeled from the building I said to my companion, "Thank God, He still loves traditionalists too!"

And that's the point. He loves everyone —traditionalists, non-traditionalists, no matter what denomination—He holds us all in His Hand. But his palm must be hurting these days from all the fighting and squirming around.

Anyway, if I were a betting woman, I'd bet on that little church in the not so far away land and I'm praying for it too!

GWYNETH J. WHILSMITH BAYFIELD, ONT.

We're blushing

I'm pleased to see the refreshed design of the *Presbyterian Record* (March). The magazine has a more dynamic look, which will attract the eyes of readers (and prospective readers). Overall the magazine has a more confident, authoritative feel but is friendly in appearance. It is more user friendly making it easier to read. The new design encourages me to read the words. The use of more colour photos helps too. May we see a new front cover logo soon? It is said, "quality is in the details." Keep up the good work.

ROB DONALD PORT CARLING, ONT.

Congratulations on your continuing excellent work. As well as the editorials, articles and photos, I particularly find the covers highly interesting. Keep up the good work.

PATRICIA BAIRD TORONTO

Off line the online

Please curb the tendency to make so much of our magazine online. A lot of the subscribers from my home church do not have computers. Some of our long time members feel left out.

ELLA HAMILTON CANNINGTON, ONT.

Editor replies: We work diligently to make certain the printed version—the hard copy magazine delivered to homes—is complete unto itself. However, there have been a few occasions (see the next letter) when we have used the online version as an extension of the magazine, to deliver information that would not otherwise fit its finite parameters.

People and Places is the only section that has more material online than in the printed version. That said, many younger church members rely wholly on the internet for information, and people aged 65 and over are the fastest growing group of computer users.

No longer blushing

I was disappointed to see that you did not think it important to print Marion Ballards's biblical, theologically sound and intelligent rebuttal to Calvin Brown's article. I read Ms Ballard's response before she sent it and was hoping that it would give readers an opportunity to consider a more thoughtful approach to the issue and in the process learn more about their Christian faith. Instead, you have reduced her article to a short letter (April 2007) and have managed to garble beyond belief what the article actually says. Whoever edited the article changed the words, "He" (i.e. Jesus) "defends Himself over and over again..." to "Calvin Brown defends himself over and over again..." And again, whoever edited the article changed "He" (i.e. Jesus) "makes no reference to His birth..." to "Isaiah makes no reference to Christ's birth ...." What is going on in the editorial department? I think an apology is in order, or, better still, print the article.

LOIS KLEMPA WENTWORTH, QUE.

Editor responds: We apologize for errors in editing the letter: It was an accidental misreading. However, that we had to edit it was a result of space limitations and the many letters engaging in the debate. So, with all due respect to the previous letter writer, we are publishing the complete version of Ms. Ballard's letter online.

Corrections

Thanks to Neil MacLellan who phoned to say we had mistyped the population of Cuba in the May issue. A digit is missing, the figure should be 11, 383,000.

People, check. Places, oops.

Thank you for publishing the picture of Doug Pruss, Jessie Bush, Vera Teasdale, Wilma Welsh and Rev. Thomas J. Kay, in the May People and Places. Unfortunately, the name of the church was not noted. So, anyone reading this magazine would have no idea where in Canada the celebrants are from.

ANN STRATHY GUELPH, ONT,

Editor Notes: Such a fine group of the faithful could only be housed in an appropriate church: Knox, Guelph, Ont.

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Ministering to St. Andrews: These four ministers all serve a St. Andrew's church in the WMS Kingston Presbyterial: Rev. Lynne Donovan, Picton; Rev. Kate Jordan, Ganonoque; Rev. Teresa Charlton, Tweed; and Rev. Anne-Marie Jones, Belleville. The photograph was taken at the Kingston Presbyterial's 121st meeting.
Photo by Larry Ducommun

After nearly a decade, Rev. Bill Vanderstelt, and his wife Lori, are leaving Latona, Dornoch, Ont., for new challenges in Goderich, Ont. The folks at Latona presented them with a painting of nearby Inglis Falls to remind them of the beautiful country they're leaving behind. Needless to say the congregation is grateful to God for the Vanderstlet's time with them. From left, Amy Biernes, youth worker, Doug Riddell, clerk of session, Lori and Rev. Bill.



People & Places

For more People & Places submissions, please visit our website: www.presbyterianrecord.ca



Mission interpretation study trips provide an opportunity to learn first hand about the issues faced by our various international partners, and to come away with a good understanding of how gifts to Presbyterians Sharing and PWS&D further the Kingdom of God. There's also sight-seeing, as this group discovered when they visited India's Taj Mahal earlier this year.
Back: Stan Currie, Peter McDougall, Rev. Steve Webb, Rev. Barry Mack and Marg Douglas. Front: Margaret Reynolds, Penny Nation, Jean Currie, Karen Plater and Rev. Laura Kavanaugh.

A very special part of the Easter celebrations at St. Andrew's Pictou, N.S., (locally known as The Kirk) was the reception of 10 new communicant members. From left, Rev. Alan Stewart, Judith and Gary Corman, Donalda Langille Christene Czapalay, Janice Porter, Heather and Phil Brown, Helen Hartling (with granddaughter Samara) Shirley and George Bedford, and clerk of session Murray Hill.





They read it in the *Record* and braved the perils of the big smoke to check it out. Inspired by an article about the Presbyterian Museum (March) 10 women (comprising half the session) and one man from St. Andrew's, King City, Ont., spent an informative evening with Rev. Dr. John Johnston, and volunteers Al Clarkson and Rev. Angus Sutherland.
Left Rear: Al Clarkson (docent), Kathy Patterson *Right Rear:* Mary McDougall, Alison Agnew, Kathy Agar, Erin Agar *Front:* Corky Agnew, Connie Agnew, Bonnie Mooney, Doris Willoughby, Lyn Murison. (The man, unnamed in the correspondence, took the photograph.)





Gordon Leggatt has been an elder at St. Andrew's, Wingham, Ont., for 50 years! To celebrate the occasion he was presented with a clock. From left, Hugh Clugston, clerk of session, Leggatt and Rev. Bernie Skelding.

Let's count the many ways these young people at St. Paul's, Thornbury, Ont., are participating in mission work: 1) They prepared and then served a meal to the church family. 2) The pancake meal was to start the Lenten season. 3) Proceeds from the meal were sent to help children in Malawi.

HAD CAKE LATELY? **Share your celebrations with the rest of the church. Send your stories to PnP@presbyterianrecord.ca along with your digital photographs, 300 dpi minimum, high quality JPEGs. Or mail the photographs to: The Record, 50 Wynford Dr., Toronto, M3C 1J7.**
To be considered for People and Places, photographs should be sharp and everyone clearly identified. The Record reserves the right to reject any photos not of sufficient quality. Photographs cannot be returned.



SPOTLIGHT

Guy Smagghe, of Presbyterian World Service and Development, right, visited the Kashtra refugee Camp, near Mansehra, Pakistan, for victims of the October 2005 earthquake that flattened many mountain villages. Over a thousand aftershocks since that fateful event have kept thousands, like the man beside him, from returning permanently to their traditional homes. PWS&D supports the camp through Action by Churches Together.

Food Tours, Fiddling and Finances at CFGB

STUDY TOURS hosted by the Canadian Foodgrains Bank have been announced for 2008. Tentative destinations include: West Africa (Sierra Leone, Liberia) or Central America (Nicaragua, El Salvador) in January and February, and a youth tour to Honduras in February. It is not too early to apply for one of these educational trips, where participants get to experience how CFGB is impacting communities. Visit CFGB's website at www.foodgrainsbank.ca for more information.

The fifth annual **Fiddlers on the Trent Festival** kicks off on Father's Day weekend, with all proceeds benefiting CFGB, a relief and development food aid agency supported by the Presbyterian Church. Held in Frankford, Ont., the event begins on June 14. A concert and barbeque dinner on Friday night follows, along with a Saturday morning canoe run. An art and paddle auction takes place that afternoon, and the Saturday evening dance and jamboree welcomes everyone to grab their fiddles and kick up their heels. The Sunday morning pancake breakfast precedes an ecumenical service and guest speakers from numerous denominations. Last year's festival raised more than $20,000, and when matched by the Canadian International Development Agency at a 4:1 ratio, total support was more than $100,000. Visit www.fiddlersonthetrent.150m.com for more information.

On March 29, the Treasury Board granted approval for CIDA to enter into a new agreement with CFGB that would grant the agency up to $100 million over five years, increasing the yearly allotment from $16 million to $20 million. This is a critical step in finalizing the new agreement. Final drafts of the terms are now being completed. The funding agreement will also provide CFGB with more flexibility to support food security activities in addition to its food aid and nutrition programming.

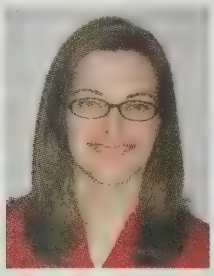
Nova Scotia Gets Canada's First Fair Trade Town

CANADA'S FIRST FAIR TRADE TOWN is Wolfville, N.S., as designated by TransFair Canada, an organization that certifies fair trade products. The idea was adapted from an initiative in England started in 1999. It didn't take long for the idea to spread, and the UK now has more than 200 of these towns, with more sprinkled throughout Europe and the United States. Fair trade ensures farmers (often living in developing countries) are paid a fair price for their product.

Fair trade towns must achieve six goals: city council must pass a resolution in favour of fair trade and agree to use such products for its own needs; the products are made available in shops and cafés; support is demonstrated by local workplaces, faith groups and schools; interest is demonstrated by the media and the general public; a steering committee is created; and other ethical and sustainable consumption initiatives are promoted.

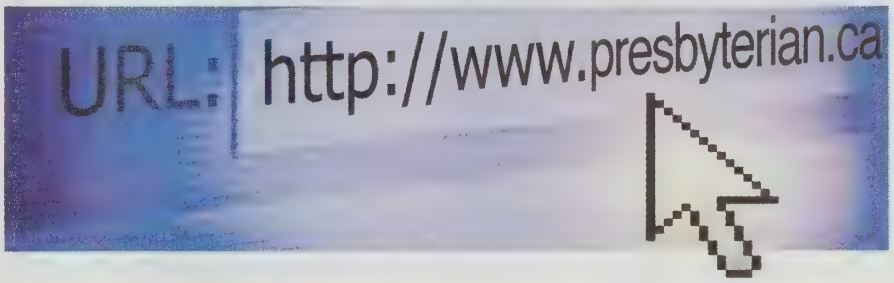
For a copy of the Fair Trade Town Action Kit contact chantal.havard@transfair.ca or visit www.transfair.ca for more information. *–AM with files from TransFair Canada*





Masterton joins Justice Ministries

KATHARINE MASTERTON has been named the new program coordinator for Justice Ministries, after serving in the position on a contract basis since last August. She had been filling in for Gail Turner, who was recovering from surgery after an extensive illness. Turner decided to retire as of April 30, turning Masterton's position into a permanent one. She brings a keen interest in public justice issues to this post, is a graduate of Carleton University with a Bachelor of Humanities degree, and is a member of Unionville Presbyterian Church.



PCC Website Launches a New Vision

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH'S WEBSITE is going through a massive reconstruction. The new site is scheduled to be launched this summer, the result of a months-long process involving an outside web design company and a team of people at the national office.

Keith Knight, associate secretary for communication, spearheaded the reconstruction process. "New technology allows us to transform our website from a library of resources into an interactive community where information is shared and conversation takes place."

He said new software allows people at the national office to easily update their portion of the website. The new format also makes the site easier to manage and navigate, and allows for the creation of discussion forums and blogs to provide for regular interaction with Presbyterians, sessions and presbyteries.

The new website is seen as a key first step in what has become Knight's two-year vision to develop an interactive online community. "I have a dream," says Knight. "It is to have every congregation connected to the web network using the same kind of content management software so that congregations and presbyteries and the national office can all talk to each other, share news and share resources."



SPOTLIGHT

Rev. Dr. John Johnston, January Will and Rev. Stephen Kendall unveil a portrait of Will's father, Rev. Dr. T. Melville Bailey during the dedication of the church's national archive's reading room in Bailey's name in late April. Bailey was the irrepressible force behind the creation of the archives (and the museum, which Johnston oversees). Bailey's historical interests included his church and his beloved hometown of Hamilton, Ont. A park there will be named after him on June 23.

Mission Takes Centre Stage at Toronto Event

BY JACK CHARLESON

BRIDLEWOOD PRESBYTERIAN, Toronto, has been involved with MissionFest Toronto, in one way or another, since its inception in 1995. The latest event, held in March, was the biggest yet, attracting 22,000 participants and relying on 230 volunteers. MFT has grown to over 200 exhibitors, 40 seminars, concerts and special programs. As a former director of MFT, I have attended each year and am encouraged by the increasing number of missions (like Yonge Street Mission and The Scott Mission, two inner-city ministries supported by various Presbyterian congregations), which present their ministries in varied formats. Other Presbyterian churches that supported the event include Smyrna Korean, Etobicoke, St. Andrew's Islington, Toronto, Toronto Korean Yum Kwang, Markham, Young Nak Korean, North York, and Light Korean, Toronto.

MFT draws international speakers to its stage, bringing attention to mission and inspiring people to get involved. Programs for singles, artists, women, pastors, business leaders, children and youth ensured there were tailored streams for just about everyone, and a refugee simulation highway enabled visitors to get a glimpse inside the life of a refugee. Over the years speakers have included Tony Campolo, Anne Graham Lotz, Loren Cunningham, John Maxwell, and in 2007, Ravi Zacharias, Henry Blackaby, Glendon Thompson, Aileen Coleman, Hilary Price and Pat Francis led numerous workshops over the three days. In addition to speakers, musicians have contributed significantly. This year's event included the Toronto Mass Choir and the Watoto Children's Choir.

My interest in MFT dates back to 1993/94 when I met with a group of individuals who had been encouraged by the establishment of similar events in Vancouver and Edmonton. The purpose of MFT was determined to provide a "showcase for missions" to the church across the Greater Toronto Area and the first event was held at The Peoples Church in 1995 when the keynote speaker was Dr. Thomas Wang from Hong Kong. In 1997, a major step was taken in faith when MFT moved to the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, and subsequently to The Toronto Congress Centre in 2005.

As a congregation with a real heart for missions, Bridlewood has been supportive in numerous ways over the years. Many missions supported by the congregation participate in the event each year and MFT gives us the opportunity to visit with them at the booths. Some of our young people have been encouraged to move into missions and have experienced short-term visits overseas and seeds have been sown for longer-term commitments.

We encourage our national church to seek out MissionFest events in their communities and come to a deeper understanding of mission work throughout the world.

Plans are already underway for MissionFest Toronto 2008 on March 6 – 8. For more information, visit www.missionfest.org.

Jack Charleson is clerk of session at Bridlewood, Toronto.

Mullin a Woman of Distinction

REV. MARGARET MULLIN, executive director of Anishinabe Fellowship Centre, part of Winnipeg Inner City Missions, was honoured with the 2007 YMCA/YWCA Manitoba Women of Distinction award. Mullin won in the Arts and Culture category, held at a gala dinner in Winnipeg in May.

"It was simply overwhelming to win the award," Mullin told the *Record*. "This award belongs to everyone involved with the ministry here and especially to the people we serve. It's been a humbling and exciting journey."

Mullin's father was a Catechist (a lay missionary with training from Toronto Bible College) in the PCC for 20 years. Her mother was Ojibway from the Sandpoint First Nations. She was nominated for the award by Vivian Ketchum, a long-time Anishinabe volunteer.

Supported by the Presbyterian Church, Anishinabe offers a food and clothing bank, warm meals, coffee and fellowship, Sunday worship, counselling, advocacy and job help to the mainly Aboriginal population living in Winnipeg's troubled north end. The centre has grown so much that a new 20-unit transitional housing complex is being built—an initiative that Mullin spear-headed, working hard to secure donations for the multi-million dollar structure.

Fifty-three women were nominated in 10 categories. This is the 31st year the awards have been distributed.

Opt-Out is Underway

A national advertising campaign kicked off in April to provide notice and inform former students of Indian residential schools of their right to decline the overall settlement agreement between government, churches and Aboriginal Peoples. The opt-out period for potential claimants will end on Aug. 20. The revised agreement will see lump sum payments distributed to all former students, with extra compensation for cases of serious abuse. The agreement also includes funds for national commemoration events, and a truth and reconciliation commission. If 5000 opt out the agreement will not proceed. ●



PHOTO: BRIAN ATKINSON, PWS&D

Helping people earn an income that allows them to live a life with dignity is an important part of the community development work of Presbyterian World Service & Development. In southern India, PWS&D partners are working with women and families on education, health care and small business development. Many are using small loans to make candles, process foods and mill timber. Success in small business development and advocacy efforts are helping women access basic services from the government and send their children to school. As their children go to school they have a chance for a brighter future and the whole community benefits.

Give gifts that grow. Support PWS&D.

PWS&D's relief and development programs operate because people and congregations financially support the work. PWS&D receives no funds from *Presbyterians Sharing*... Make a donation in the name of another and PWS&D will send a *Gift of Hope* card to them on your behalf.

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Record takes firsts at CCP

THE *RECORD* received four first place citations at the Canadian Church Press 50th anniversary awards, in May.

Staff writer Amy Maclachlan continued her winning streak by receiving a first place in the Magazine-News Story category, for Christ Is The Hottest Show In Town (September 2006). She also received a second place for her interview with Martha Kuwee Kumsa (January 2006).

Managing Editor Andrew Faiz took two firsts for his feature report on the AIDS conference (October 2006) and for humour (Pop Christianity, April 2006). Gwyneth Whilsmith received a second place for her article on grieving, On Being A Widow (May 2006). The *Record's* former designer, Samantha Edwards, was also honoured; and the March 2006 environmental issue received a first for service journalism.

Canadian Presbyterian at International Reformed Meeting

A GATHERING OF 30 PASTORS from 16 countries met in Geneva in April to forge connections, reignite relationships and discuss the role of large, influential congregations in today's Reformed churches. Rev. Dr. Richard Topping, minister at St. Andrew and St. Paul, Montreal, lecturer at The Presbyterian College, and co-author of *Together in Ministry: The Theology and Practice of Ministry,* attended the meetings on behalf of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Organized by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, of which the PCC is a member, the meeting focused on using Reformed tradition as a way to equip the church for the challenges of the 21st century.

"I hope this is a time of spiritual renewal and new energy for you," said WARC president Clifton Kirkpatrick, who received the E.H. Johnson award for cutting-edge mission at the PCC's 2004 General Assembly. "It is clear to us we need to be re-weaving our relationships in the Reformed movement. We are trying in many ways to reconnect with our networks in the World Alliance of Reformed Churches."

In a press relese, the WARC president said the larger, influential congregations have much to offer the Reformed family while the Alliance has resources that could be better utilized by these congregations.

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Japan needs Youth Missionaries

BY AMY MACLACHLAN

REV. RON WALLACE REMEMBERS JAPAN well from the 1970s, when there were 2,000 missionaries working in that country. He calls those the glory days for mission work in Japan. He was a missionary there from 1976-1981 (and was one of nine Canadian Presbyterians there).

"Japan was one of our major mission fields, but those days are long gone," said Wallace, the PCC's associate secretary for International Ministries. He returned there last March for the Japan North America Mission Forum. Joining him on behalf of the Presbyterian Church were Rev. Daniel Cho, minister at Rexdale, Etobicoke, Ont., and convener of the Life and Mission Agency Committee, and Reuben St. Louis, Youth in Mission coordinator. Five other denominations, all of which have had close ties to Japan for decades, also attended, including the United Church and the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Working through the Korean Christian Church in Japan and the United Church of Christ in Japan (or Kyodan), the PCC has been a mission partner with Japan since 1927, and was active until a few years ago when the last two missionaries returned home.

"Priorities for mission are different," Wallace continued. "There aren't as many people who want to go teach English to healthy, middle-class Japanese students; they think they should go teach those living in poverty in the south."

Budget restrictions are another reason for the drop in missionary participation. According to Wallace, while missionaries are paid by Japanese schools (most mission work involved teaching), the time, money and staff needed at home to administer large mission programs are becoming increasingly difficult to come by.

"So the forum asked the question, how can we be involved in mission when we have empty hands? How can we maintain the relationship in these changed circumstances?



"I guess it depends on how you view mission."

Wallace said there was much discussion about how Japan's society is aging, along with the church. "They're having a hard time reaching out and including youth in the church. They're a lot like us, but even more so. They want missionaries to help them attract young people."

Wallace said some chaplains have thriving youth groups, though once the students graduate, they drift away from the church. To curb this, the chaplains are thinking about starting churches for young people, so graduates can attend a church where they feel at home and can find others their age.

Despite weakening ties, there are personal relationships that still exist, and such relationships will continue through exchanges, consultations, and participation in special events (like the KCCJ's 100th anniversary in 2008, and the 150th anniversary of Protestant mission in Japan a year later). The exchange of missionaries and funds, however, are quickly becoming a thing of the past.

"It's interesting to go back and to see the changes since [I was there in] 1981," said Wallace, "but it's sad to see the expressed need by the Japanese churches, and the unwillingness and inability to respond to that need in a significant way."

BUILDING HOPE

You can see it from a distance, rising above the inner city community, a large red roof.

Anishinabe Place of Hope is taking shape. It is large and square with a solid foundation built with cement and faith.

The challenges have been many:
- acquiring the land
- dealing with government agencies
- finding the funds

The large **red roof** represents the efforts of dedicated people who have worked tirelessly and with conviction to create a safe home for individuals who seek to begin a new life.

WICM

Can you help? Anishinabe Place of Hope urgently needs funds to complete interior spaces for those whose need is so great. **Your donation will make a difference and give encouragement to individuals who are beginning a new life journey.**

"And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock." Matthew 7:25

Winnipeg Inner City Missions Of The Presbyterian Church In Canada

P. O. Box 2444, Station Main
Winnipeg, MB R3C 4A7

Flora House 204-586-5494

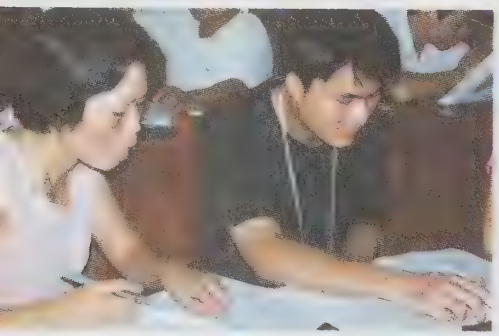
Anishinabe Fellowship Centre 204-942-8682

Charitable registration: #862942554RR0001

Giving the Gift of Language in Rural China

Volunteer missionaries show faith through example. BY AMY MACLACHLAN







Rev. Brooke Ashfield, front, Sue Senior, Debbie Burns and Mike Burns are surrounded by their students, a group of middle school teachers. Below right: the Canadians showed them how Presbyterians party: with a cake.

"An increased education opens doors and opportunities," said Debbie Burns, who had no prior experience as a teacher, before going to China last summer to teach English. "It can change lives. It can make a difference. Getting an education is a big benefit in rural areas."

Burns and her husband Mike, as well as fellow Knox member Sue Senior and minister Brooke Ashfield travelled to China with the Amity Foundation's Summer English Program, where teams—who aren't necessarily trained teachers—spend four weeks to help rural school teachers master the language they themselves have to teach, thanks to a restructured high school curriculum in China that sets high standards for English proficiency.

The Amity Foundation is the social service wing of the China Christian Council, the official Christian church in China. (Of China's 3 billion people, only 16 million are Christian.) Amity is ecumenical in the partners it works with, and will serve all religious groups; therefore, it does not encourage proselytizing. Leading by example is the mantra, as the foundation identifies major needs within Chinese communities, and works hard to meet them.

"Amity's strength is in its grassroots development that then encourages sustainable programs—intellectually, spiritually and physically," said Senior. "The organization empowers all of the participants: the local institutions and administrators who host the program, the Chinese teachers who enroll in the program and finally the overseas teachers who deliver the program."

This was the first Canadian Presbyterian group to participate in the program. The PCC used to participate in a one-year teaching program with Amity, and ran a China-Canada exchange in cooperation with the Anglican and United Churches, but this new program offers participants a short time away from home, yet fully immerses them in Chinese culture and community. Interest is extremely high, and the four annual spots are filled through 2009.

The team of four was placed in Zhangzhou, a port city in the Fujian province. The fact that there are few foreigners in Zhangzhou caused a stir when the Canadians arrived. "People followed us. They stopped their cars. They quickly helped us in shops. It was a little disconcerting at first!" said Mike Burns.

But it didn't take long to feel at home. "Our host teachers were so caring," said Senior, a teacher. "We became good friends. They told us, 'We enjoy your joy.' That's the idea of their hospitality."

"One teacher told me what a wonderful gift this has been," said Debbie Burns, who noted how the teachers' confidence soared in just a few short weeks. "She finally felt able to be creative and to bring herself into her teaching."

"Christianity is best shared by example and by the life we choose to live," said Senior. "The modern day mission is best served by programs like Amity in our culturally-diverse world. We were reminded that support and guidance not only came from the Amity facilitators, our Chinese host school and The Presbyterian Church in Canada, but ultimately from our faith and scriptures. It was our faith and not our religion that guided us."

Tipping towards fair wages

ENI—US church leaders are lauding a wage agreement between the McDonald's fast-food chain and a group representing migrant farm workers in the state of Florida.

The agreement between McDonald's USA and the Coalition of Immokalee Workers requires the restaurant chain to pay one cent more for every pound of tomatoes picked by the farm workers, a move that will double the farm workers' wages.

The agreement announced this week follows a similar agreement in 2005 between the workers' coalition and Yum Brands, the corporate owners of the Taco Bell fast-food chain. In a statement, Rev. Clifton Kirkpatrick, clerk of the Presbyterian church said the agreement "may be the tipping point for the entire fast-food industry in a real move toward human rights and fair food for everyone."

Human side of globalization

ENI—Global migration poses new challenges for churches worldwide, said Rev. Samuel Kobia, the general secretary of the World Council of Churches.

The phenomenon is the "human side" of globalization, especially for churches. "Welcoming the stranger is not optional for Christians. Nor is it conditional," Kobia stated. "Christ didn't call for Christians to welcome those strangers whose papers are in order or who speak our language." The WCC general secretary urged churches to increase their capacity to practice hospitality in an era of "new forms of migration."

"It is easier for a church to welcome migrants as long as they adapt to the traditions and policies established by the host church. This is assimilation," he stated. "Integration, on the other hand, implies a willingness to accept the contributions of migrants to change the church and to create something new. This is more difficult for many to accept."

Yeltsin praised by faith leaders

ENI—Religious leaders praised Boris Yeltsin, the first president of Russia, who died in April at age 76, for enabling a religious revival. "Boris Nikolayevich strove to maintain good relations between the state authorities and the Church," Patriarch Alexei II of the Russian Orthodox Church stated.

Sheikh Ravil Gainutdin, the chairman of Russia's Council of Muftis, said Muslims are grateful to Yeltsin for the "law on religion" passed during his tenure. Yeltsin was unpopular, however, with many Russian Muslims due to the protracted war in Chechnya.

Archbishop Tadeusz Kondrusiewicz, leader of Russia's Roman Catholics, said that the fact that religious services are held daily across the country after decades of being banned are "living witness of the benign rule" under the former president.

The Bible affirms identity

ENI—"What I believe we need for a renewed theological grasp of scripture, is the recognition that scripture is something heard in the event where the community affirms its identity and seeks its renewal," the Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams said in Toronto in April.

Williams lamented what he called a "rootlessness" in the Anglican approach to scripture. He said: "We've lost quite a bit of what was once a rather good Anglican practice of reading the Bible in the tradition of interpretation."

He said that scriptural texts should neither be isolated from their context, nor seen as being of only limited relevance because of the prevalent cultural understanding at the time they were written. Williams added: "We read the Bible less in worship. We understand and know it less."

We are all Virginians

ENI—"The escalation of gun violence compels us to call for an end to the manufacture and easy distribution of instruments of destruction," said Rev. Robert Edgar, the general secretary of the US National Council of Churches after the killings at Virginia Tech University. "A faith that expresses compassion for all God's children is opposed to violence in all forms."



In Geneva, the WCC's Rev. Samuel Kobia said: "In deference to those who have died and with concern for the future, we all must ask why such killings happen so easily. Why are these incidents repeated as if there are no remedies?"

Kobia, a Methodist from Kenya whose own country has seen many shootings due to the prevalence of firearms, said: "We are all Virginians in our sympathy, but many people around the world are also Virginians in their vulnerability to the misuse of unregulated guns."

Baptisms for everyone

ENI—Eleven German denominations, including Protestant, Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox and Anglican churches, have formally recognized each other's baptism, in German.

Baptism is a "powerful bond of Christian unity," said Bishop Wolfgang Huber of the Evangelical Church in Germany. Baptism is a religious ceremony performed with water and is acknowledged in the Christian world to be a commandment of Jesus and the fundamental rite of initiation into the Church. In Germany there are already some regional agreements on baptism but this is the first formal agreement at a national level.

Seven Juicy Subjects

Reading about the sins is a pure joy. BY ANDREW FAIZ

Anger by Robert A. F. Thurman
Envy by Joseph Epstein
Gluttony by Francine Prose
Greed by Phyllis Tickle
Lust by Simon Blackburn
Pride by Michael Eric Dyson
Sloth by Wendy Wasserstein
The Seven Deadly Sins:
Oxford University Press and
The New York Public Library



Sin takes a whacking, at Knox, Dunnville, Ont. Rev. Geoff Johnston explains: "In Mexico at Christmas time they make a pinata representing the seven deadly sins, which the children duly break open. I thought that a good idea for Easter as well. At the end of the service the Sunday School lined up to take their turn at whacking sin. When the pinata broke all sort of candies spilled out on to the floor; the kids collected them and two of them stood at the door, handing out a taste of salvation to the congregation as they went home to lunch

That Phyllis Tickle is absolutely smart; and a fun writer to read. Her introduction to her slim volume, *Greed*, is worth the price for the whole package. (That could be said for any one of these books.) She runs through a history of Christianity, bringing it to our world today: "This culture [is] faced with issues of human responsibility and training and social management, even of human manipulation, for which no prior intellectual guidelines exist and for where there is not yet a fully realized shared imagination." Yup, that pretty much sums it up—the Reformation is done, Christendom is gone, the landscape has shifted. Infused with knowledge from science, psychology, medicine, from other social and political sciences our understanding of religion is brought into sharper focus. (See the Letters to the Editor in this magazine the last few months as readers discuss the Virgin Birth as metaphor.)

Sin, too, is under review. We no longer immediately damn a man for stealing: we ask why he stole. Was it poverty? Bullying? Social Conditioning? Perhaps he has a chemical imbalance. Behind simple right and wrong are larger social issues, hidden psychologies, subtle medical dynamics. There is more to everything. Even the ancient list of the Seven Deadly Sins has subtleties, as the brilliant essayist Joseph Epstein writes in *Envy*: "Connoisseurs of the deadly sins divide them into the warm-hearted or cold-blooded sins. Lust, anger and gluttony in this reckoning are thought warm hearted, bodily sins, proceeding as they do from physical passions; pride, greed, sloth and envy are cold-blooded, proceeding as they do from states of mind, and (with the exception of sloth) inherently crueler."

Sloth is possibly the one sin that would likely not make the cut if the list were to be reimagined today. The late, great playwright Wendy Wasserstein makes a good case for a little more sloth—a push-back against the tyranny of the work ethic: "I always felt I was on the verge of finding happiness, if only I could lose weight, develop a better vocabulary in thirty days, have tighter abdominal muscles and buns, speak Spanish, achieve inner peace, schedule my day more efficiently, become more assertive, communicate more clearly, express the full range of my emotions, get a man to marry me in ten dates, get my daughter into Harvard at age twelve, understand the subtext of everything a man said, eat only organic produce, have the heart of a Rollerblader in South Beach, Florida, learn the joy of having sex in four hundred different positions and loving every one of them, find my inner child, renew my outer adult, come to terms with bad things happening to good people, embrace the Hebrew God, embrace the Christian God, embrace the Muslim God, and learn to write poetry like the actress Suzanne Somers." (Doesn't that pretty much sum up our age?)

The list of the vices is not biblical; Gregory the Great honed it in the 6th century as a teaching tool, if you will, to better understand our fallen nature. Dante, of course, built an epic poem around the list. These seven slim volumes may lack that grand stature but they elicited in me an emotion that is neither a vice nor a virtue: pure joy. What else would you get when you give seven smart people seven juicy subjects?

Summer Book Club

Tasty Morsels for the Soul



- Eat this Book: A Conversation in the Art of Spiritual Reading
- The Friendship of Women: The Hidden Tradition of the Bible
- How Can I Forgive You? The Courage to Forgive, The Freedom Not To
- Classics by Augustine, a Kempis and Wesley
- Christian Fiction
- Christian Chick Lit
- The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South
- A Primer on Grieving
- Psalm 23 and Grant Us Wisdom, reimagined

Seek and Ye Shall Find

There is good Christian fiction, you just have to look for it. BY CAROL J. GARVIN

The Holographic Reading Club meets every Tuesday, and one evening the subject turned to Christian Fiction.

"You mean devoid of any resemblance to real life?" one of us interjected.

"The stories are superficial, with stilted characters, unrealistic conflicts and predictable conclusions," claimed another.

"Give us examples," I challenged him. He dredged up several book titles, all of which one astute member identified as having been written at least a decade ago. Homework was assigned: we would each select a novel published within the last year and return to the next gathering with a critique.

"My first problem," reported Trina, a pony-tailed college student, "was trying to find anything in my church library that was written after 1997. The woman who looks after it said she couldn't justify buying new books because not enough people in the congregation were borrowing the ones they already have. I finally went to the Christian bookstore and bought one." She waved *Mozart's Sister* by Nancy Moser (Bethany House) for everyone to see.

"Is it any good? What's it about?"

"It's the story of Wolfgang Mozart's older sister, Nannerl, who is just as musically talented as he is but given the times in which she lives, is left in her brother's shadow and struggles to figure out God's will for her. Moser based the story on actual family correspondence and Mozart biographies so it feels very authentic."

"What a coincidence," elderly Miss Emily Jane spoke up. "I also chose one with a musical focus from the mid-1700s. *The Longing Season* by Christine Schaub (Bethany House) is a fictionalized biography of John Newton and what led to his writing of the beloved hymn Amazing Grace. The descriptive writing is excellent—both the locales and the characters are very well depicted."

"Obviously you two made better choices than I did," said Donald, a retired clergyman. "Mine is also historical fiction, but the history is so badly distorted that the inaccuracies get in the way of the story. *The Expected One* by Kathleen McGowan (Touchstone) refers to an anointed one who will possess the ability to decipher ancient clues and help a 21st-century secret organization locate a hidden manuscript said to have been written by Mary Magdalene."

"Hmmm, sounds rather familiar. So will the Church be up in arms over this one?"

"Not likely. Despite its reference to biblical characters, there is such a plethora of implausible details that the whole thing falls into an indefinable chasm somewhere between folklore and fantasy."

As the laughter dissipated, the kindergarten teacher, Marcy Abbot, spoke.

"I feel a bit like a rebel because my book is distinctly children's literature." She held up her book. "*The Adventures of the God Detectives* by Nancy Reeves and Linnea Good (Wood Lake) is a collection of stories designed to help children explore ways in which God invites people into a relationship with him."

The Christian market has begun to expand its self-imposed guidelines albeit still avoiding vulgarity, immorality and explicit sex

"Are the stories and characters believable?"

"Most of them are," said Marcy, "although the dialogue is sometimes implausible. Can you imagine an eight-year-old at a party thinking about war and bursting out with, 'Oh, no, I'm going to drown in sadness?'"

One by one the rest of our club members offered their comments on the books they had chosen to read. After the last volume was added to the pile on the oval coffee table, we sat back to summarize our findings.

"Not all of them, but the majority of these books surprised us by being better than we thought they would be," admitted Trina finally. "Obviously bad writing still exists, regardless of the decade in which it was written, but that's just as true in secular fiction."

According to the Christian Book Association Christian-product sales are estimated at more than $4.2 billion, with a full quarter of that from books.

"Maybe we just have to keep reading to find the good ones," I said with a wink. The future of the Holograph Reading Club would be secure for a while yet.

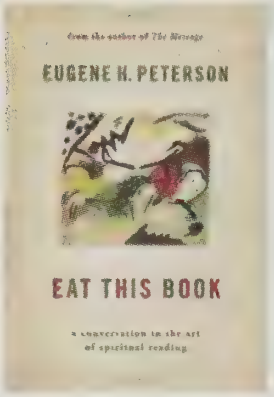
Carol Garvin lives in Mission, B.C. [Author's note: the Holograph Reading Club and its members are products of the author's imagination.]

A Tasty Morsel

A book that provides real nourishment.

BY KENNETH STRIGHT

Eat this Book: A Conversation in the Art of Spiritual Reading
By Eugene Peterson
Grand Rapids: Eerdmans



Go ahead! Eat each and every page from Introduction to the last little morsel.

Eat it as John of Patmos ate the scroll of the angel in imitation of Ezekiel before him. Eat this book as nourishment—food for the soul.

It's sad to say but many, in dining on this delight, will be 'oblivious to the obvious'—that what we consume is and always will be what makes us who we are:

"Oblivious to the obvious—that it is given to us in the form of a story that is intended to shape our entire lives into the story of following Jesus, a life lived to the glory of God."

And it is Peterson's obvious purpose to have us enter a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ as we feed on this word that points to the Word:

"Eat this Book is my metaphor of choice for focusing attention on what is involved in reading our Holy Scriptures formatively, that is, in such a way that the Holy Spirit uses them to form Christ in us."

Scripture is part of our nurturing in the faith. Worship takes us to the place of an intimate conversation with God. Scripture is our way into the liturgy and scripture needs to become more of a spiritual exercise for those who would grow in faith. So Peterson invites us to explore the ancient experience of *lectio divina*—spiritual reading. This form of biblical reading takes us beyond any attempt to find answers or study doctrine. And then Peterson shares his personal experience of translating ancient words to give a balanced diet to modern readers as he recounts his long years working on his best-selling *The Message*.

Those who find in Peterson a present prophet will find much to chew on in his this work. Those who may be a little pickier in their eating habits will find this work well worth digesting ... yes, to the last morsel!

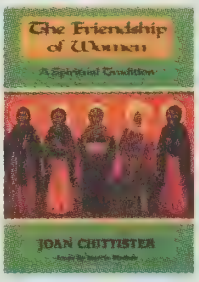
Rev. Kenn Stright is minister at Tantallon-St. Margaret's Bay, N.S.

Eternal Mystery

Friendship is the air we breathe.

BY FAIRLEY RITCHIE

The Friendship of Women: The Hidden Tradition of the Bible
by Joan Chittister, *Novalis*



Joan Chittister writes that friendship "colours the very air we breathe. We can see it in the eyes of old women, in the kitchens of the women they love. We can hear it in the voices of one young woman giggling to another over the phone. We can feel it beating in our own hearts on lonely rainy days in faraway places." It has fascinated philosophers, spiritual teachers and mystics, artists and poets, yet remains "eternal mystery, eternal desire." Chittister draws in threads from classical scholars such as the author of Ecclesiastes, Cicero, and Ælred of Clairvaux, "who wrote a theology on friendship founded on the belief that 'God is friendship.'" But these views of spiritual life faded. "In a world dominated by war, famine, plague, and oppression, the God of Love lost out to God the Judge and Jesus the Lord."

The women Chittister focuses on belong to the "hidden tradition of the Bible." True, we are told a fair bit about a few, such as Mary Magdalene and Esther. Others, like Phoebe and Lydia, are deigned a few verses. Others are even more obscure. And yet they have much to teach.

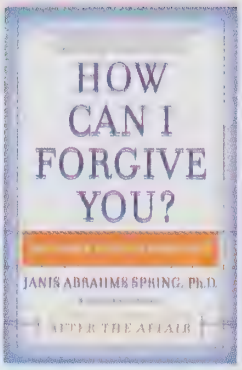
Martha of Bethany knows that women weren't allowed to study Torah, and yet Jesus teaches it to Mary. Martha recognizes the tradition He is breaking down. And she speaks her belief that Jesus is the Messiah before anyone else other than Peter. She trusts and speaks the truth of her own experience, no longer excluded because she is a woman. Like Martha, "any woman who honours the truth in her frees the woman she calls friend to discover for herself what is behind the next question."

Fairley Ritchie has a spiritual directions practice in Toronto.

Summer Book Club

A Shared Venture

Forgiveness requires developing a new relationship. BY ROD TOMLINSON



How Can I Forgive You? The Courage to Forgive, The Freedom Not To
By Janis Abrahms Spring
New York: Harper Collins

Many of us as Christians have directive to forgive—forgive those who trespass against us; to forgive is divine; love your enemies; turn the other cheek—but not training in how to forgive. We are frustrated and puzzled by how hard it is to let go of our hurt, especially when we have seen little or no remorse on the part of an offender. Unable to forgive, we might then ask, "are we being bad Christians?"

This is a book written by a Jewish psychologist who relied on a rabbi and a Protestant minister for guidance and encouragement while also basing her work on her own experience with thousands of patients over many years. In the course of developing her ideas, she both borrows from and challenges traditional thinking about forgiveness as found in the Bible, other scripture, behavioural science, self-help literature and popular culture. Her methods of discovery clearly mark her as a liberal thinker. Her suggestions are technically sound and spiritually encouraging.

Spring's book recognizes four different approaches to forgiveness: Cheap Forgiveness, Refusing to Forgive, Acceptance, and Genuine Forgiveness. The first two are dysfunctional, the latter two are adaptive.

Cheap Forgiveness is premature, superficial, and undeserved. In the face of your fear of or neediness for the offender you are willing to sacrifice yourself to preserve the relationship.

Refusing to Forgive is a reactive, rigid and compulsive response that cuts you off from life and leaves you stewing in your own juices. It is used when you wish to punish the offender and see forgiveness as a weakness.

Acceptance as a means of forgiveness is a conceptual gift to the field of forgiveness study, which was discovered by Spring from her extensive practice experience. She writes: "Acceptance is a gutsy, life-affirming response to violations when the person who hurt you is unavailable or unrepentant. It is based on a personal decision to take control of your pain, make sense of your injury, and carve out a relationship with the offender that works for you." As you go about taking the task of healing into your own hands, you empower yourself and make peace with the past. When a tormented youth shot and killed his son at Taber High School in Alberta, Rev. Dale Lang's generous act of forgiveness was widely publicized. I believe that his forgiveness was an example of acceptance as a means of forgiveness.

Genuine Forgiveness is essentially interpersonal and requires the heartfelt dedication of both the offender and the offended to the process of healing the relationship. "It is a shared venture, an exchange between two people bound together by an interpersonal violation."

Genuine Forgiveness is conditional upon a price that must be paid by the offender and an agreement by the hurt party to allow the debt to be settled.

And, lastly, it requires a transfer of vigilance from the hurt person to the offender. The offender must be fully conscious of the offense, learn to be more mindfully preoccupied with it and intend never to repeat it again. The hurt party must work toward becoming less preoccupied and begin to let go.

Rod Tomlinson is a member of Varsity Acres, Calgary.

Poem

Psalm 23, for chemotherapy BY ART VAN SETERS

Loving God, ultimate protector,
you lift my sagging spirit;
you beckon me to rest gently,
softening my pallet, surrounding
me with fragrant freshness.
You restore my innermost being
even when I tunnel into the depths
of nausea's thickening darkness
utterly limp with weakness.
When I feel completely helpless,
you lift me beyond fear
and buoy my flagging hope
as you journey with me.
You signal specific directions I can take
and offer a vision of victorious celebration
over the attacking cancer in my body.
Your covenant goodness and mercy
have become my constant companions
and I will forever travel in your presence.

Rev. Art Van Seters is much better since he wrote this last year.

Poem

God of Calvary's Grief and Glory

WORDS BY STUART COLES
SUNG TO THE TUNE OF GRANT US WISDOM BY HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK

God of Calvary's grief and glory,
nursing Earth with hidden pow'r;
now fulfil creation's story.
bring the bud to christic flower;
grant us wisdom,
grant us courage,
for the facing of this hour
for the facing of this hour.
Large and little evils hound us,
mock your methods, lose the way;
fears and doubtings still impound us.
free our hearts for work and play;
grant us passion,
grant us humour,
for the living of this day
for the living of this day.
Heal your quarrelling children's madness,
make our world one peace-tuned whole;
humanize our lonely sadness,
rich in things and poor in soul;
grant us wisdom,
grant us courage,
lest we lose Shalom's true goal
lest we lose Shalom's true goal.

Striving on mid marsh and glaciers,
gird us with your energy,
give our dreams their burning basis
in your dream to set Earth free;
grant us passion,
grant us humour,
for this time and times to be
for this time and times to be.

Rev. Stuart Coles is a retired member of the Presbytery of East Toronto.

They Cause Us to Despair

The classics may no longer be relevant in our world.

BY HARRIS ATHANASIADIS

Handbook on Faith, Hope and Love by Saint Augustine
The Imitation of Christ by Thomas a Kempis
A Plain Account of Christian Perfection by John Wesley
All in the Foundations of Faith series—Relevant Books



"In centuries past, influential Christian thinkers ... have penned literature that continues to influence Christians today. The Foundations of Faith series unearths these works for a new audience of twentysomethings hungry for revolutionary material that speaks to their lives..." So reads the back cover of each book in this new series. The goal, clearly, is to get theological/spiritual classics read by a younger generation.

Does the series succeed in doing this? In my opinion: no. Why? The problem is in trying to understand something written centuries ago. We may understand the words, maybe even the sentences, but do we understand the world from within which and to which it was written? If we do not, we not only misunderstand the writers and whatever wisdom they have to offer us, we misuse their ideas in ways that can be detrimental. If you are going to try to make a classic work come alive for a contemporary audience, especially a younger one, you need to translate the ideas into a contemporary worldview.

> We choose to see mystery in the chance randomness of life in the world, rather than having to think God is in control of it all. God's providence is in the kind of love that is able to raise up newness and depth in life in the face of the inexplicable and despicable.

The three classics in question, for instance, share a view of divine providence that has been upheld within Christianity for the past 1,900 years. This view is that God is in control of all that happens in the world, more or less. God actively guides history, and seemingly bad things are permitted because God uses them for some greater, hidden good. People of faith trust God's good purposes even if bad things have to happen. In the past 100 years or so, however, this whole vision of God as

continued on page 28

The Worst Stories Ever Told

Chick-lit is paternalistic, simplistic and insulting to thinking women. BY AMY MACLACHLAN







Mom Over Miami By Annie Jones
SAHM I Am By Meredith Efken
Million Dollar Dilemma By Judy Baer
All published by Steeple Hill

Are there women out there who actually enjoy reading books that target Christian women living cookie-cutter lifestyles where men are hopeless and helpless, and women must tend the family and keep the home fires burning? What about books like Alice Munro's *Hateship, Friendship, Courtship, Loveship, Marriage*, where a mind is challenged, lives are deep, dynamic and multi-faceted, and not everything has a happy ending? Even for those who like their fiction "lite," surely there are plenty of worthy novels out there to entertain.

Although some characters playfully criticize the most outdated, patriarchal comments, I was still left wondering if this lifestyle was being promoted or put down. One of my favourite passages is this one from *SAHM I Am* explaining how to welcome home "our dearest hardworking husbands who sacrifice so much to provide for our families.

"In our home, we spend from four to five every afternoon in preparation activities. These include the following:

1) I make sure my hair is done, and I put on makeup and change into fresher clothes.
2) My children make sure their clothes are clean, their hair is neat and their rooms are sparkling.
3) We tidy up the house.
4) Dinner is always nearly ready and the table is set.

Sometimes, we literally "roll out the red carpet"...and give him a paper crown the children coloured. But my children's favourite is the "Daddy's Home" song. I wrote the lyrics a few years ago, and set them to the tune of 'Oklahoma!'"

Enter the market for Christian chick-lit, perhaps the worst idea ever devised. These poorly written, unoriginal, clichéd novels with ooey-gooey white-washed problems of bland families and their dull, predictable lives, must actually be written for children, as the dialogue found inside is so simplistic, so trite, so sickeningly goody-two-shoes and so exceedingly obvious, that I can't believe any adult would actually have other adults in mind when penning these tales. These three are published by Steeple Hill as part of their Café series—a set of books written by Christian women, for Christian women, generally targeting (and portraying) stay-at-home moms in traditional, conservative families. Some of the books even include discussion questions at the back—as though there would actually be anything to discuss about these books other than how terrible they are.

The funny part is that this type of thinking sounds oddly familiar. I read it in an October 1965 article of the *Record*, about what a woman should do to ensure her family is at church on time. With five small children and an "absent-minded" husband whose only tasks are to put the offering into the envelope and make sure he knows where the car keys are, the author offers up the following tips for punctuality: "I make sure cuff-links have been returned in pairs to their proper boxes. I also search the closets for Sunday clothes that may need dry-cleaning ... I choose a simple hair-do for myself, preventing any lengthy combing-out sessions. I check everyone's shoes for frayed laces or loose buckles. Either can be disastrous when you're in a hurry." The list goes on.

I have nothing against more traditional marriages; so long as they're based on respect and mutual understanding, and feature a husband who can cook dinner, scrub the toilet and carry on an intelligent conversation. My faith does not—and should not—relegate me to being cook, housekeeper, sock-darner, mother and wife, and does not exclude me from being writer, reporter and traveler. Unfortunately, these books lead me to believe otherwise.

Amy MacLachlan continues to seek a Christian Candace Bushnell to read.

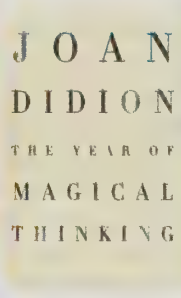
A Primer on Grieving

You have to travel through this dark gift. BY GWYNETH J. WHILSMITH

Travelling Through Grief by Susan J. Zonnebelt Smeenge and Robert C. Devries, *Baker Books*
Grieving, A Beginner's Guide by Jerusha Hull McCormack, *Paraclete Press*
The Year of Miracle Thinking by Joan Didion, *Knopf*
The Unwanted Gift of Grief, A Ministry Approach by Tim P. Van Duivendyk, *The Haworth Pastoral Press*









There is a proliferation of books on grief and none are written for pleasure, but rather for the encouragement of those recovering from the death of a loved one. Some do this better than others.

Travelling Through Grief is authored by a married couple whose first partners died. They look on bereavement as a detour from the journey of life—a detour that will be frightening and bewildering and lonely but will lead you back not onto the main road on which you travelled with the deceased, but onto a new road where you will travel alone with self-confidence.

The first step or task is "the need to accept the reality that your loved one has died and is unable to return." That is not to say we should try to forget our loved ones because in actuality, the authors say, it is in keeping their memories alive that we are better able to work through our grief. They give the assurance that heaven is a definite place where Jesus has prepared a space for each of us and that, in all probability, we will recognize each other, but in a much different way. On earth our identities come from our families; in heaven our identity will be as children of God.

Perhaps the ultimate how-to book on grief is *Grieving, A Beginner's Guide*. It's a misnomer to call it a beginner's guide since those newly acquainted with grief will tell you it takes months before they can concentrate on more than a few words. The author, a widow, does speak from personal experience, but one can also tell she has gathered material from other sources. I read this book about a year after my own husband died and at the time didn't feel it was very helpful. However, several months later, when I looked the book over again I saw the many places I had scored and underlined.

The Year of Miracle Thinking is a horribly true story of the year after Didion's husband's sudden death at the dinner table, when at the same time their only daughter was lying at death's door in a nearby hospital. It is the story of her bewilderment, of memories good and bad, of her all-consuming anxiety about her daughter, her deep grief and insane fantasy that her husband wasn't really dead.

By the end of the book, she has found no resolution to what happened but realizes we can't keep the dead alive. We have to let them go. She says, "Life changes fast. Life changes in the instant. You sit down to dinner and life as you know it ends."

The author of *The Unwanted Gift of Grief, A Ministry Approach* is a chaplain in a large city hospital where he encounters death and grief almost every day. On a personal level he draws on the death of his mother and the birth of his first-born child, a Down's Syndrome baby.

"Grief", he says, "is an unwanted gift, but a gift we must use. If we don't do our grief work, our grief may grieve us into some form of physical illness." He assures the reader that everyone grieves differently; some will be emotional while others withdraw. Some will try to stay busy, thinking this will keep them from entering the wilderness of grief, while others will be immobile, unable to tackle anything.

He says the only experts are those who have experienced grief. I will go one step further and say we are only experts on our own grief.

Gwyneth Whilsmith's series on grieving appeared in the Record last year and received a citation from the Canadian Church Press.

Summer Book Club

Marketing Spirituality

Lighting small sparks in the dry tinder of congregations.

BY JOEL COPPIETERS



Walk Through the Bible founder Bruce Wilkinson may not have been a total unknown when he wrote *The Prayer of Jabez*, but the little book's nine million sales were certainly helped by marketing creativity. The list of spin-offs include three children's versions, *The Prayer of Jabez Journal, The Prayer of Jabez Devotional for Children, The Prayer of Jabez Devotional for Adults, The Prayer of Jabez Bible Study, The Prayer of Jabez for Women*, a 90-minute audio version, a video, the musical companion *The Prayer of Jabez Music ... A Worship Experience*, backpacks, jewellery, Christmas ornaments, vanilla-scented candles, mouse pads, and even a framed painting of Jabez. After refusing a proposal for Jabez candy bars, licensing agent Leslie Nunn Reed told the *Los Angeles Times*, "We want to be careful about not over-commercializing this."

Mobilizing church members to spread the word and sell books has been a key part of the marketing process for the publishers of *Jabez* and other recent spiritual blockbusters. This process has been studied and finetuned by Greg Stielstra, who leads the marketing team at Zondervan, a subsidiary of Harper Collins. The term "pyromarketing" has been coined to explain the process of lighting small sparks in the dry tinder of receptive congregations and then gradually fanning the flames into a growing blaze. Stielstra has worked with Philip Yancey, Lee Strobel, Jim Cymbala, Drs. Henry Cloud and John Townsend, Joni Eareckson Tada, Billy Graham, Dan Quayle, Oliver North, Dr. C. Everett Koop and Rosa Parks, and is not shy about his accomplishments with pyromarketing. In an online blog he claimed that he could take a quilting book promoted "to one-tenth of one percent of left-handed quilters," and land it on the non-fiction bestsellers list.

The extent of Stielstra's involvement with the book is unclear, but the principles of pyromarketing were clearly at work with Rick Warren's *The Purpose-Driven Life*. With sales approaching 25 million copies, it has been described as the bestselling nonfiction hardback book in history. Warren has acknowledged the message of the book is not new, but it was an ideal fit for pyromarketing. Warren's previous book *The Purpose-Driven Church* and his credibility as the pastor of one of America's fastest growing churches gave his new book a receptive audience among some 30,000 pastors. Typical blockbusters use media blitzes to capitalize on name recognition or current events, but The Purpose-Driven Life was launched with no advertising to speak of. As with other pyromarketed books, the sales began very slowly, built to an impressive crescendo and are still going.

"The success of *The Purpose-Driven Life* or *The Passion of the Christ* remains puzzling to many," says Stielstra, "but not to those who know their secret. What do these remarkable success stories have in common? They each used pyromarketing."

The *Left Behind* series also combined skillful storytelling and compelling themes. Created by bestselling evangelical author Tim Lahaye and written by Jerry Jenkins, the books in the series sold 75 million copies, shattered all previous Christian fiction sales records, exploded onto the secular bestsellers lists and generated $650-million U.S. in sales that more than doubled the staff and revenue of Tyndale House Publishers. LaHaye and Jenkins masterfully expanded the literal dispensational reading of a few dozen verses of scripture into thousands of pages of detailed edge-of-your-seat narrative complete with plane crashes, assassinations, pestilence and United Nations conspiracy plots. The themes of judgment on godless governments and permissive societies seemed to strike powerful chords with Christians and unbelievers alike.

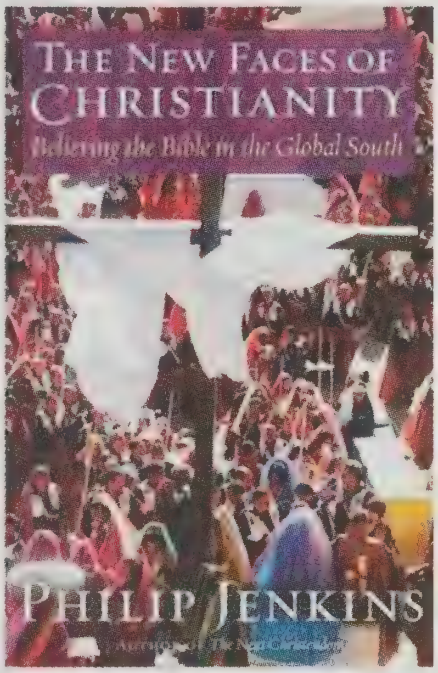
According to a 2004 American Association of Publishers study, the *Left Behind* series and *The Da Vinci Code* rebuttal books accounted for a significant portion of the 36.8 per cent increase in the sale of Christian books in 2003, a year during which the sales performance of most other trade book segments were flat or negative. Some may object to either or both of those titles being lumped into the category of Christian books, but their economic impact is certainly undeniable.

Joel Coppieters is a freelance Christian writer.

Challenging Assumptions

The North-Atlantic captivity of the church is coming to an end. BY WILL INGRAM

The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South
by Philip Jenkins
New York: Oxford University Press



Philip Jenkins should be read by anyone interested in the future of Christianity. In *The Next Christendom*, Jenkins called attention to the fact that the growth of the Church in the "global South" was a phenomenon that had been largely overlooked but which will have dramatic effects upon the future of our faith. "In our lifetimes," he observes in the earlier book, "the centuries-long North Atlantic captivity of the church is drawing to an end."

The New Faces of Christianity furthers that exploration by offering a fascinating analysis of ways that Christians in the global South tend to interpret the Bible differently than those in the global North. Although the most obvious division along North/South lines, at this moment in history, can be found in the Anglican tradition in relation to human sexuality, Jenkins addresses but does not become preoccupied with this issue.

A study of this magnitude cannot help but deal in broad categorizations. Although it can be argued, for example, that the use of "global North" and "global South" are as arbitrary as defining categories for human experience, Jenkins is not deterred by this challenge. In the end, the amount of qualitative research and anecdotal examples woven into the book make his conclusions both defensible and persuasive.

Although a book about "comparative methods of biblical interpretation" may seem, at first glance, to be rather uninspiring, Jenkins writes in an engaging way, and demonstrates that the issue of biblical interpretation has serious implications for a wide range of pressing social and geopolitical concerns. Wealth and poverty, politics in postcolonial societies, the place of women in the church, the role of the Hebrew Scriptures/Old Testament in the church, the nature of interfaith dialogue (especially in Muslim-Christian relations), the Christian perspective on the supernatural, the ways that people from traditional and polygamous cultures interpret the Bible—all are explored in a readable and engaging style.

Without resorting to unfair criticisms, Jenkins demonstrates that many of the assumptions that Euro-American Christians bring to the task of biblical interpretation are deeply shaped by our culture and history. As the Christian faith continues to grow in the South, it will be important to become engaged with the ways that our brothers and sisters interpret Scripture, since their contexts not only influence their interpretations but may be closer to the experiences of the communities described in the Bible. Biblical texts which were written to people experiencing persecution, poverty, disease, minority religious status and oppression have a different resonance when read by modern Christians who are experiencing those same realities—and it is both illuminating and necessary for us to hear their interpretations.

Without resorting to unfair criticisms, Jenkins demonstrates that many of the assumptions that Euro-American Christians bring to the task of biblical interpretation are deeply shaped by our culture and history.

One of the great strengths of this book is that it challenges us to realize that what we assume to be normative and objective interpretations may need to be re-examined in light of the emerging contributions from Christians in the global South. The Church—everywhere—will be challenged and enriched by those insights.

Rev. Will Ingram is minister at Morningside-High Park, Toronto.

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continued from page 23

"Power" has been questioned seriously and replaced by God's "Love" as the central category to understand God's working in the world. This also means that we choose to see mystery in the randomness of life in the world, rather than having to think God is in control of it all. God's providence is in the kind of love that is able to raise up newness and depth in life in the face of the inexplicable and despicable.

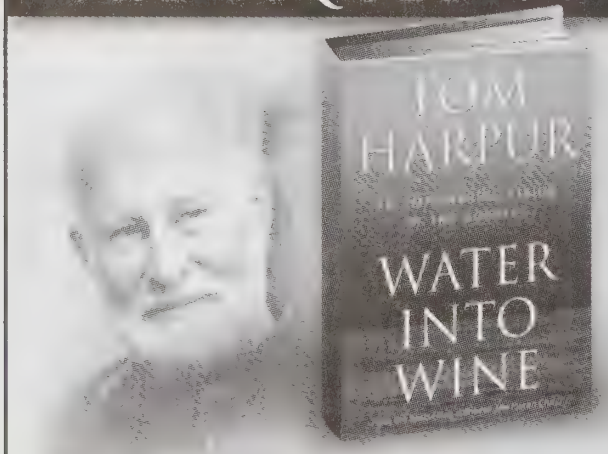
So what does this mean for the classics? It means that unless you are able to translate some ancient categories into more contemporary ones, you are going to be turned off or misled by them. Do we tell someone who has lost a child, for instance, that in God's providential design, this is meant for good, because this is what Augustine believes? Or do we tell a young twentysomething that passionate, erotic energy ought to be denied in order to develop his spirituality, because this is what Thomas a Kempis believes? Or do we tell a person who is struggling with his or her faith that a true Christian is one who not only believes she is forgiven and accepted by God, but is expected to overcome all doubt and struggle if she possesses the Holy Spirit because this is what John Wesley believes?

Obviously if we are left to this, the classics will repulse us, cause us to despair of being good Christians or misdirect us. But this is not fair to classic sages of the Spirit because what they had to say in their own worlds made much more sense. Unfortunately, this series does not give us sufficient tools to help us translate the wisdom of the past into the present.

And I lament this because I believe that St. Augustine's teaching on the goodness of all that is and the nature of evil as a corruption or parasite feeding off of the good, is still the best theory for understanding the dynamics of evil and sin. I also believe that a Kempis' little classic on the way to being authentically human combines wonderful insight on how to integrate thought and life in a world where too much action is thought poor and too much thinking is disintegrated from lived experience. I also believe the issues Wesley addresses over rival Calvinist and Lutheran conceptions of being human point to fundamental alternatives on how we can understand human nature and the

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process of becoming Spirit-filled humans in the face of life's struggles.

And so, should we read the classics today? Absolutely! But let us find some good secondary sources to accompany our primary reading. There is infinite wisdom for our absorbing if we are willing to invest in the discipline.

Rev. Harris Athanasiadis is minister at St. Mark's, Don Mills, Ont.



KNOX SUMMER FELLOWSHIP

Summer Fellowship provides a chance to go deeper in biblical teaching, bringing together people from all across the Greater Toronto Area. Come for dessert and coffee, and then to feed on the Word of God!

Images of God

	Speaker	From	Topic Scripture
June 20	Philip Ryken	Senior Minister Tenth Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, PA	Husband Jeremiah 2:1-3:15
June 27	Donna Petter	Assistant Professor of Old Testament Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Boston, MA	Warrior Exodus 15:1-18
July 4	James Goodloe IV	Pastor Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church, Richmond, VA	Peacemaker Isaiah 48:16-22
July 11	Greg Scharf	Associate Professor and Chair of Pastoral Theology Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL	Vineyard Owner Isaiah 5:1-7
July 18	Bryn MacPhail	Senior Minister St. Giles-Kingsway Presbyterian Church, Toronto, ON	Rock Psalm 62
July 25	Donald Carson	Professor of New Testament Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL	King Psalm 99
August 1	Victor Shepherd	Professor of Systematic Theology Tyndale Seminary, Toronto, ON	Builder Job 38:1-18
August 8	Dennis Ngien	Research Professor of Theology Tyndale Seminary, Toronto, ON	Father Hosea 11:1-11
August 15	John Vissers	Principal Presbyterian College, Montreal, PQ	Judge Psalm 7
August 22	Kevin Livingston	Senior Minister Knox Presbyterian Church, Toronto, ON	Potter Jeremiah 18:1-12

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We acknowledge receipt of gifts from people who in their Last Will and Testament remembered The Presbyterian Church in Canada in 2006. These gifts, totaling $3,073,775, will continue the work of the Church in the areas of church extension, pensions for ministers and widows, overseas work and the general work of the Church.

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Pen, Passion, Poetry

A reason to support PWS&D through rhyme. BY PIETER WYMINGA



As a kid I remember we went on short vacations to countries neighbouring our native Holland. In France I would see quite a number of men with missing legs. How come? I would ask. Then my mom would explain to me the results of the First World War. These horrid wars have continued. The killings today are just as mean as then. We see the news or read it regularly. *The Presbyterian Record* keeps us up to date. And I hope it moves us all. But I also find there is a callousness amongst people; Darfur is miles away from us, why should we be so concerned?

Recently I had the opportunity to visit the Presbyterian World Service and Development office in Toronto. When meeting some of its staff members I learned what it truly means to be committed to one's work and to carry it out with zeal. The agency, in conjunction with its overseas partners Action by Churches Together and Caritas, amongst others, works to improve the quality of people's lives in many impoverished countries in the developing world. They help build wells in drought-stricken Darfur, or provide counselling to abused women and young girls in Malawi, or ensure that schools have adequate teaching materials and hospitals have medical supplies for the treatment of HIV/AIDS.

The population in much of the developing world is growing, disease is spreading, water levels are dropping, tribal warfare is escalating in a brutal and vicious way and natural calamities are threatening in many regions. Life is harder for many while the aid agencies experience an increasing number of obstacles to carry out their work. Yet, PWS&D remains committed to its goal, as demands on the agency are not slowing down. PWS&D needs our assistance as well as the assurance that we are here to support it.

St. Andrew's, Guelph, Ont., is celebrating its 180th anniversary—its early beginnings coincide with the foundation of the City of Guelph. In those early days, primarily Scottish immigrants worshipped at St. Andrew's. Today its members come from far and wide and are being welcomed to a house of God where they will feel at home regardless of race, heritage or wealth.

To celebrate our anniversary, we approached the *Record* and proposed a poetry contest to highlight the work of PWS&D. Members of St. Andrew's, Guelph, will adjudicate the submissions and the congregation will make a donation in the name of the winning entrant to PWS&D; the *Record* will publish selected submissions. All you have to do is write a poem (no epics, please; but open to all other styles). We particularly encourage youth and youngers to

participate. We hope parents will work with their children to write something.

The first thing you will need to do is learn more about PWS&D; fortunately its website is very helpful: www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd. The *Record* is available online as well: www.presbyterianrecord.ca, so you can read news and mission updates as well. Of course, you can also go through your print copies, which you surely have archived at home.

The deadline is October 31, 2007. Please send your poems to contests@presbyterianrecord.ca.

The poem should raise awareness for the work of PWS&D, express respect, love and compassion to those who suffer but stay away from showing pity. Respect is always a noble characteristic.

Best of luck; try hard and you'll feel very satisfied. You'll also be of great help and encouragement to the staff at PWS&D. God bless.

Pieter Wyminga is a member of St. Andrew's, Guelph, Ont.

Becoming Heroes

BY MARION SCHAFFER

When my sons were little
I used to watch them sometimes
coming to life as GI Joe; oh to be like him!
charging through the jungle,
    sending rockets through the air,
        rescuing wounded comrades . . . .
they saw themselves victorious, winning,
strong,
    but sometimes,
        sometimes,
            they fell down,
                dead.
They were practicing dying, my little boys,
    learning how to be heroes.
It frightened me;
I held my breath and I thought,
no, no, please,
    not for them,
        not for them such destruction.
Too many have run off to change the
world in battle;
my father,
    my brother,
        my cousins,
            my kin,
all called away,
    away,
        and away,
            never to be the same again.
War is seductive, promising glory;
    a uniform inspires respect,
it fosters dreams of fame,
    wearing it transforms innocence
    into pride.

What dreams a soldier has!

He will charge toward the ranks
of his enemy,
    he will gallop unharmed through
    his foes
        as he wields his mighty sword
and chops off every head!

And when the battle is
over he will ride,
victorious, in the parade!

How they will celebrate him!
How they will roar his name!
Here comes the victor now!

In his dreams the hero sees no pain,
no agony or woe,
just trumpets blaring
and flags waving to urge him on!

What amazing joy will be his prize!

What joy?

What kind of fame?

The limp anonymous body bag of the
dead hero is carried off to Valhalla
by a shrieking Valkyrie
    is left there on the growing pile;
        he is fodder,
            he is refuse,
                he is dust.

summer directory

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Sights, Sounds and Smells of India

Visiting the church's projects is a deeply cultural experience.

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY AMY MACLACHLAN

As I begin to discover this country of a billion people, it doesn't take long before my mind is whirling. India is full of complexities and contradictions, of old and new, of beauty and disgust, of excess and absence. I'm travelling with three Presbyterian Church representatives: Wilma Welsh, the moderator, has been here several times before. The warm embraces and knowing smiles she receives make it seem like she is returning home. Ron Wallace, associate secretary of International Ministries, has also visited in the past, often knowing what to expect at each destination and rhyming off historical facts during long and brutally bumpy drives. And Sarah Kim, director of the Women's Missionary Society, is an India first-timer like me, hesitant as we strike out to new places, yet still enjoying what the country offers. In two weeks' time, when Sarah and I get to go home, Ron and Wilma—a moderator's work is never done!—will head to the country's north for a partner's meeting in Kashmir, where border disputes with Pakistan make the area vulnerable to terrorist attacks.

When we arrive in the southern city of Chennai (where Christians comprise about seven per cent of the population, compared to about 2.2 per cent in all of India), we go for a short walk along the roadside. It is late afternoon. The sun is shining. The humidity is thick, as it will be for the duration of our trip. In this city of 4.5 million (with one third of those living in slums), my senses don't know what to attend to first. My eyes widen at the stifling mish-mash of cars, motorcycles, bicycles, trucks, auto-rickshaws and buses, spewing their choking fumes into the air, travelling without the guidance of lanes, tailgating each other, cutting each other off. Entire families whiz by on one motorcycle. Incessantly honking horns tell other drivers to move over, pedestrians to get out of the way, and to rouse sleeping cattle from their slumber on the streets. Small, scruffy dogs sniff the ground for food scraps. Girls in saris walk the sand-strewn and pot-holed sidewalks. Young men in jeans lounge under a shade-giving tree.

Throughout the coming weeks I see more: desolate slums crammed along river banks; garbage polluting the water, the streets, and hanging on trees like rotting Christmas



At church services in India, men and women sit separately. Enough for service in Arakhut, pictured here, celebrated the release of their jail prisoners who were wrongfully imprisoned following a local uprising.





Clockwise from top: The church in Amkhut looks a little after the celebration service in Amkhut; a woman near Chennai tells how church-supported self-help groups have improved her life and her community.

The smells too, are never-ending. The sweet, rich scent of cinnamon, cardamom and vanilla used to sweeten tea tickle my nostrils

decorations; children playing in the dirt along the curb; women cooking over open fires on the sidewalk, just steps from their tin and tarp shacks; a seemingly endless beach coloured with children's rides and snack stands, and locals who gather here to walk, to sit and chat, to play (but not to swim); stately colonial buildings beginning to wear; statues commemorating British leaders; Hindu shrines; street-side merchants selling fruit, flowers, flip-flops; and old women seated on the ground beside small, blazing red chili peppers that are piled to such heights the women are nearly lost beside them.

The smells too, are never-ending. The sweet, rich scent of cinnamon, cardamom and vanilla used to sweeten tea tickle my nostrils; the bold, pungent smells of cumin and turmeric drift lazily from bustling restaurants; the light fragrance of jasmine that women wear in their hair; the sour scent of marigolds that are strung together and placed around the necks of Hindu gods; the robust, woodsy smell of sandalwood used in skin care products; and the heady aroma of roses ensure my sensitive sniffer is kept constantly busy. And then, the wreaking, choking stench of rotting garbage as we drive by the rudimentary town dump nearly causes my eyes to water. In India, my senses never get a break.

But it isn't for the scenery, the culture and the food for which we are here; this little team from the national office has travelled to the other side of the world to visit hospitals and schools that the church has supported for decades, and to talk with the missionaries and dedicated workers who do the work here every day.

Roofs for the Roofless and the Institute for Development Education (IFDE) are committed to giving women and youth a leg-up in their communities. Supported by the Presbyterian Church, and helping anyone regardless of religion or class, they run community colleges for poor and at-risk young adults; education centres that teach English, typing, computer skills, tailoring, sewing and nursing; and after-school programs where



The PCC's Ron Wallace and Moderator Wilma Welsh are welcomed and thanked for the church's support following attacks on Christians.



Some boys stop to get a better look at their Canadian visitors outside Chennai.

children whose parents can't read or write can get a snack and help with their homework. They also offer support for women looking to start small businesses by securing bank loans; provide education for children who must work for a living rather than go to school; offer veterinary care and agricultural help to local farmers; and start women's self-help groups that build self-confidence and teach life skills that empower them to better their communities and their own living situations. One girl nearly begins to cry as she tells of the impact an improved education has had on her life. "It has helped me stand on my own feet," she says.

Again and again, we are greeted with warm smiles; garlands made of roses and lotus flowers are placed around our necks, incense is burned and wafted towards us, and our cheeks and forearms are slathered with a saffron-coloured paste as a welcoming gesture. The women whom we visit speak freely, giggling as several relate personal stories of lazy husbands and crying children, and their new-found freedom thanks to the self-help groups to which many of them now belong. "We used to just be in the kitchen," said one woman. "But with this program, we came out of the house."

The women's dark eyes dance with pride as they show us their handy-work—candles, embroidered pillow shams, clothing—wide smiles stretch across caramel-coloured skin, long dark hair pulled back in a braid, swept up in a bun. Their saris—each one different from the next—are a kaleidoscope of colour: sapphire and violet, crimson and aquamarine; embroidered with threads of silver or gold, the loose end tossed over the left shoulder, trailing behind them like a vibrant veil.

All of the projects we visit are supported by Presbyterian World Service and Development and/or the Women's Missionary Society. "Our programs are alive today because of them," said Anitha Mahendiran, director of IFDE. Monies also come through Presbyterians Sharing, as missionaries sent by International Ministries are supported this way.

Our travels take us to a fishing village that was wiped out by the tsunami. The wailing winds as we walk along the beach, where narrow wooden boats and green balled-up fishing nets line the shore, bring the scent of the sea to my nostrils; its salty, fishy, fresh aroma sweeps through my system, cleansing my mind of invading thoughts so that all I notice are the swirling clouds in the graying sky, the bits of seaweed and driftwood washed up along the sand, the tiny crabs scurrying quickly, nimbly, along the yielding ground, and the growing waves that beat the shoreline. We are followed by about 30 men who show off the new boats that were bought by the Presbyterian Church and aid agencies from around the world. Later, the entire village gathers to thank the church for much-needed support during a time of great loss.

In centrally-located Indore, we visit the MIBE Graduate School of Nursing, begun in 1945 where WMS member Bessy McMurchy was the first principal; drive out to nearby Hatpiplia to visit a leading hospital there; and visit a small village where a community health program has begun. We also visit a hospital in Ratlam, where facilities are growing and services are improving, and its HIV/AIDS program offers treatment, care







and counselling; and a school where a newly built classroom is being dedicated, thanks to money from the WMS. "I have seen the labour, the love and the care of the missionaries, and the work of the teachers," says one man during the ceremony.

Later, in Jobat, we attend a large celebration commemorating the opening of the Masihi Christian School, also made possible by the WMS. The newly built, two-storey school proudly dwarfs the old, rundown building that used to serve the students. As the ribbon is cut, the students rush in, running in and out of classrooms, shouting to each other, and showing tooth-faced smiles that betray their excitement for the brand new facility.

The PCC has had a missionary presence in the Vindhya Satpura region (better known as the Bhil Field) since Rev. Dr. John Buchanan and his wife Dr. Mary Buchanan first travelled here in 1897. The region was once a presbytery of the PCC. During our six days and five nights here, we stay in the old missionary wing of the Jobat Christian Hospital. The hospital is full and alive with activity, as some sort of new outbreak has just hit, likely carried by mosquitoes. The virus is often fatal, and we hear of several deaths during our trip. I'm grateful for the netting that covers my bed each night.

Despite the modest conditions in Jobat, I can't help but feel a romantic affinity for this place: the cracked windows that gaze upon the rolling green hospital grounds; laundry blowing gently while drying on the line; the peeling walls and rickety wooden dressers heralding days gone by; the now-neglected kitchen where missionaries of old must have cooked their meals; the tarnished sink where they hand-washed their clothes; the candles they used to light their way to the bathroom each night before there was electricity here.

This feeling of history, of walking in the footsteps of those who lived and served here, tending to sick patients, visiting communities, forming relationships, was heightened during our day at Amkhut—a rural area travelled to through a fairytale-like landscape where roads wind between emerald-green hills, and beside creeping yellow flowers, gargantuan banyan trees with feathery, finger-like roots that reach from above to the ground below, and delicate teak trees with lace-like leaves that





Despite the modest conditions in Jobat, I can't help but feel a romantic affinity for this place: the cracked windows; laundry blowing gently while drying on the line; the peeling walls heralding days gone by.

Traditionally, women in India cover their heads while in church—even when it's 40 C outside, like it was this day in Amkhut.

A nurse with the community health program in the rural village of Amkhut.

lend the landscape an air of Victorian formality.

While here, we take part in the celebration of the release of the 13 Bhil prisoners who were wrongfully imprisoned following a violent Hindu uprising that burned churches and ransacked Christian homes. Thousands came out to celebrate their safe release, having travelled for many miles in the blistering, baking sun; the kind of oppressive, relentless sun that leaves one utterly wilted.

It is for this reason that I am exceedingly grateful for the mercy of shade and shelter found inside the old WMS missionary residence in Amkhut. The striking two-story stone building was built around 1910 and is truly a step back in time, with its wrap-around porch, floor-to-ceiling windows, wispy, gauzy curtains, cool concrete floors softened by faded rugs, claw-footed tubs in musty bathrooms, rusty locks and loosening door knobs. I can picture the women who once lived here; sharing meals at dinner; reading in the parlour; walking out the door and up the hill to the charming white-washed church; tending to the magenta flowers that grow along the garden patio; inviting locals, whom they had cultivated rich friendships with, inside for a cold drink; and at the end of the day, ascending the steep, dark wood staircase to the second floor, its finish now dulled from years of ware, its aging banister helping you along the way.

The people here, in Amkhut, at this celebration, are obviously grateful for the work of the Presbyterian Church—for the support it showed while these men were imprisoned, for the missionaries it has sent, for the doctors and nurses who work under its auspices, for the community health programs it started and still continue today. I have stepped into a rich legacy of service, friendship and education that started much before I even walked the earth.

I begin to understand the affinity that 55-year Canadian missionary Pauline Brown has for the country she now calls home. Though retired this year, it is to India where she hopes to return to live out her life. She is intricately woven into the fabric of the Bhil society; intimately concerned for their well-being, painfully distraught over their challenges, exceedingly joyous over their good news and celebrations. She first came here as a young nurse, eager to serve her church and the people who would soon become family. Today, she fits in as one of them with her long dark hair, traditional sari, unwavering hospitality and a quick, sometimes stinging wit that is oft accompanied by a slightly upturned mouth and a jovial glint in the eye.

"As they say here, 'You used to be our mother church, now you're our sister church,'" says Pauline. "God has planted something special here. The relationship between Canada and Vindhya Satpura is really unique."

2007 Graduates

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White Oak, Mississauga, Ont.
Diploma of the College



Jeffrey Crawford
Glenview, Toronto
Diploma of the College



Gregory Dickson
St. Andrew's, Scarborough
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Tae Ho Hwang
Young Nak Korean, Toronto



Hae Young Kim
Open Door Presbyterian



Ryu-Yun Kim
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Arlene Onuoha
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Robert Royal
Leaside, Toronto
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Myung Suk Yun
Toronto Korean
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GENERAL ASSEMBLY *certificate*



Edward Charlton
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Grant Gunnink
Cornerstone Community, Kleinburg, Ont.



Koon Kau Leung
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Fallingbrook, Toronto



Brent Ellis
Chalmers, Hamilton, Ont.

MASTER *of* THEOLOGY



Bong Kyu Choi
Mial Korean Community



Daniel Wong
Peoples Church, Toronto

DOCTOR *of* THEOLOGY



Emily Rodgers
First, Meadville, Penn.

Presbyterian College

MASTER *of* DIVINITY



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Guildwood, Toronto
Diploma of the College

with distinction



Giancarlo Fantechi
St. Andrew and
St. Paul, Montreal
Diploma of the College

with distinction



Allan Peter Farris
Guildwood, Toronto
Diploma of the College



Linda Jill Foster
St. John's, Cornwall, Ont.
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Han Gyun Kim
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St. Paul, Montreal
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Siu-lai Lam
Montreal Chinese
Diploma of the College

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Ronald D. Fischer
Trinity, Kanata, Ont.

Presbyterian College *continued*

CERTIFICATE *of the* GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR SPECIAL COURSE OF STUDY *and* DIPLOMA *in* MINISTRY



Timothy Francis Stuart Ferrier
York Memorial, Toronto

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David Ernest Peters
Zion, Charlottetown

Vancouver School of Theology

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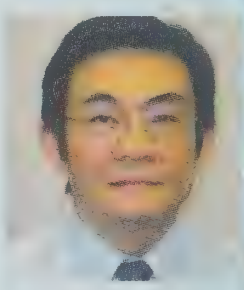


Wendy Adams
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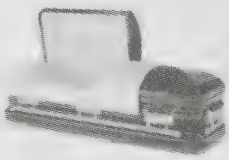
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Learning to Walk

Act justly, love mercy. BY PHIL CALLAWAY

My angel daughter grabs my omelet with both fists and hangs it from her little brother. Within seconds, milk is everywhere. Plates crash to the floor. Hollering ensues: the kind that peels paint from walls. I stand quickly to resolve the situation, banging my left knee hard on the underside of the table. Clutching at the wound, I accidentally smack my knuckles on the sharp table edge

The screaming is louder now. More omelet is being distributed. The phone rings. It is a telemarketer. I hang up on him. The phone rings again. I pick it up and yell, "We're having breakfast alright? Call back in 2012!" It is my mother-in-law this time.

"Will you come over for lunch?" she asks.

"We'll be there in an hour," I promise, apologizing profusely: "Keep me in the will...please?"

The car we own is a recent upgrade. The doorjamb is lower than I am used to. Climbing in, I smack it hard with my eyebrows. This is the funniest thing the kids have seen since the Roadrunner did in the Coyote. They are pinching each other with delight. I can see them in the rearview—despite the swelling.

"How much farther?" says four-year-old Stephen. "I gotta go." We are five miles out of town and nearing the crest of a hill. Suddenly, the tape machine dies. So does the engine. The power steering ceases to function too. I bang the steering wheel with my sore knuckles as we coast to a halt. "Dog biscuits! Engine trouble!"

"It's the gas thingee," says Stephen. "I was watchin' it."

"Daddy," he asks, "Where's the gas station?"

Good question. One I'd been asking myself lately. Perhaps you've asked it too. Where does a tired parent go when you're running on empty? When you badly need a jump-start, an oil change and a tune-up? When the one-minute devotional is too long? When you fall asleep on the treadmill and hit the wall hard? Here are three simple keys to help you find the missing peace:

1. Learn to walk. When my son was in first grade I believed the most important thing on earth was my job. One night my son watched me work. He said, "What you working on?" I told him. He asked, "Why?" I patiently explained that I had so much to do that there weren't enough hours in the day. He squinted at me and said, "They should put you in a slower group." Micah 6:8 is the perfect verse for parents who need a slower group. It says, "What does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

2. Seize the evenings. Whenever possible, keep your schedule free after dinner. Our children are teenagers now and I'm convinced our relationship with them is strong in part because we often said no to the demands of others—so we could take delight in them.

3. Take time to pray. When Jesus was inundated by a thousand demands, He often took time out to pray. So go where Jesus went: to the Father. There is no better place to find peace, power and purpose for living. When I was tempted to stray far from God, I could not erase from my mind the memory of my mother praying for me. God answered those prayers. He will answer yours too. He will fill your tank with courage, strength, and hope as you walk with Him.

Phil's latest book is Laughing Matters (Multnomah).
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Yodeler's Patience

A primer in power-waiting. BY DAVID WEBBER

I could sense his presence long before I could see him. The spring sunshine had a cast to it that seemed to make my binoculars crystal clear. Feeling his presence, I slowly glassed the meadow all around me, then the forested edge and finally the steep hill behind the small marsh to the east. There were birds everywhere, but I sensed something more than birds. Letting the field glasses dangle around my neck, I sat back on my heels in the cover of some willow scrub at the meadow's edge.

Five minutes passed and then a movement caught my eye. It was on the steep hill behind the marsh but I couldn't make out what it was with my naked eye. Even with my binoculars, the shape of an old gray coyote was hard to distinguish against the winter-killed grass. The old yodeler was watching me from his bed in the grass, had been all along. The movement that caught my eye was him deciding to stand up, him deciding to reveal his presence. He looked right at me as I watched him with the binoculars. And then, slowly, he faded down the steep hill into some trees at the end of the marsh.

I thought he was gone for good and so I stood up. Slowly I moved into the meadow towards a small observation hummock in its middle. It was one of my favorite spots from which to call spring bears and talk to Carl J. I had spread Carl J's ashes on the little hill a couple of seasons before so that we could shoot the bull and hunt the bear from it in the spring. As I made my way slowly to the hill, another movement caught my eye. The old coyote was standing at the forested edge of the meadow watching me again. I sat on my heels and after we watched each other for a time, I got up and slowly continued my way to the hill. Yodeler continued to watch me, and then he began to move obliquely to intersect my path. He paused some 40 meters from me on a small hummock of his own and watched me make my way to mine. When I sat down in the grass at the top of my little hill, he sniffed, scratched and lay down to watch from his.

We sat together for better than two hours, Yodeler and I. I glassed for bears and he watched me. I called for bears and he watched me. I talked to Carl J. and he watched me. I ate a sandwich and drank a flask of coffee and he watched me. I drained the coffee from my bladder and he watched me. Never once did he move. Never once did he take his eyes off of me. He just patiently, oh so patiently, watched me.

"You old coot!" I said to him at last. "If I was some New Age, tofu snortin', reincarnation believer I'd swear you were Carl J come to tell me how to bear hunt

properly. But I ain't and you ain't, so would you kindly get lost so I can bear hunt without you staring at me like that?"

Yodeler cocked his head and continued to watch me. I decided two could play that game. I lay on my belly just like he was, propped my elbows on the grass to support my binoculars and we commenced a staring contest. It took a long time but I was the first one to flinch. I got up, dusted myself off and stomped out of the meadow. It was dusk. Yodeler continued to watch until I was off the meadow. I peered back through the trees to see him finally get up, stretch, sniff and trot towards the forest edge.

By the time I got back to the truck the light was gone and I was enlightened. Wildlife often display great patience but the old yodeler coyote was better at it than anyone I had run into before. Perhaps he was guarding his territory; perhaps he was just curious; the truth is I don't know. For whatever reason, Yodeler had decided he was going to watch me until I left. That was his decision. Patience was what enacted his decision.

I guess I've always thought about patience as something akin to aggravated inaction or P.U.ed passivity or frustrated procrastination (perhaps because I am not very good at any of that stuff). But when I think about Yodeler's patience it was anything but inactive or passive and he certainly didn't seem like he was just wasting time. He was totally and fully and purposefully engaged in what he was doing. Patience was how he related to me.

When I think about patience biblically, the first thing that comes to my mind is God's patience. I think it was Karl Barth who talked about God's patience as being a "purposeful concession of space and time." That sounds something like Yodeler's patience as he related to me. Over and over again in the Bible, God takes the initiative to deal with a sinful humanity through the action of patience. God's action of patience is driven by a commitment to love. It is demonstrated in everything from the withholding of an immediate death sentence at the disobedience in the Garden (Gen 2:17, 3:14), through the repeated choice not to reject a disobedient Israel (Hos.11:8-9), and finally through the deferment of the final coming of Christ with judgment (2 Pt.3:9). All of these choices are engaged through the action of God's patience, driven by love, in order to give opportunity for repentance. God's patience is powerfully engaging and active stuff, sort of like "power waiting."

And here is the thing. Like God takes the initiative of patience with me, God invites me into this patience thing too. The most compelling invitation is in Jesus' "parable of the unmerciful servant" (Mt.18:23-35) but it is throughout the Bible. Like God power-waits over me, so I am called to power-wait over my teenage daughter, my wife, my neighbour, even my enemy. And the beautiful thing is, from a biblical perspective, patience is not only a God-exercised initiative but it is a God-given one too ... a fruit of God's Spirit (Gal.5:22) to the life lived in its power. "Now may the Lord direct (our) hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ." (2 Thessalonians 3:5)

Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the Record. *He is minister of the Cariboo, B.C. house church ministry. His most recent book is* Like a Winter's Aspen: Embracing the Creator's Fire.



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Look at the pictures under the blanks of the puzzle. These show some of the wonderful things God has made. Then match them up with the letters of the alphabet found below the puzzle. After you have decoded it, you can read the questions written long ago by the psalmist (Psalm 8: 3 - 4, New Century Version) and which we still ask today.



= A	= H	= O	= V
= B	= I	= P	= W
= C	= J	= Q	= X
= D	= K	= R	= Y
= E	= L	= S	= Z
= F	= M	= T	
= G	= N	= U	

Lord our Lord, your name is the most wonderful name in all the earth !

To report a vacancy for the next issue of the Record please contact Deborah Leader
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All notices of pulpit vacancies will be charged to the congregation: $40 minimum for one-time insertion or $25 per insertion for four or more. This charge applies to all congregations. Contact the Record office regarding items for this column.

Ministry Opportunities and Interim Moderators

International Ministries is looking to recruit a missionary to serve in Central America, most likely in Guatemala. A committed Christian with a theological education, lay or clergy and preferably able to speak Spanish. Interested candidates should contact Rev. Ron Wallace, Associate Secretary for International Ministries, 416-441-1111 extension 255 or Rwallace@presbyterian.ca.

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Bass River, N.B., Bass River Pastoral Charge; Rev. Kent Burdett, 101 Dutch Point Rd., Hampton, NB E5N 5Z2; 506-832-4985; kburdett@nbnet.nb.ca.

Halifax, N.S.; Knox Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. D. Laurence Mawhinney, PO Box 1972, Lunenburg, NS B0J 2C0; 902-634-4410 (office); 902-634-9212 (home); dlmawhinney@eastlink.ca.

Sunny Corner Pastoral Charge, N.B., St. Stephen's, Sunny Corner, St. Paul's, Warwick; Rev. H. Martyn Van Essen, 7 Hierlihy Rd., Tabusintac, NB E9H 1Y5; 506-779-1812; hmvanessen@hotmail.com.

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Brockville, Ont., First Presbyterian Church; Rev. Geoff Howard, Interim Moderator, 38 Elizabeth Dr., PO Box 440, Iroquois, ON K0E 1K0; 613-652-6215; gl.howard@sympatico.ca.

Montreal, Que., Taiwanese Robert Campbell Memorial; Rev. Dr. Bill Klempa, 155 Lac Louisa Rd. N., Wentworth, QC J8H 3W8; 450-533-5321; wklemp@po-box.mcgill.ca.

Pincourt, Que., Ile Perrot; Mark Farrell, Convener, Search Committee, 242 Fifth Ave., Pincourt, QC J7V 5L3; 514-453-4796; markim@ca.inter.net.

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Vankleek Hill, Ont., Knox, Hawkesbury, Ont., St. Paul's; Rev. Ian MacMillan, RR 2, Cornwall, ON K6H 5R6; 613-931-2545; a3100@glen-net.ca.

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Harriston, Ont., Knox-Calvin; Rev. Kees Vandermey, 55 Church St., PO Box 638, Elora, ON N0B 1S0; 519-846-2420; vanknox@sentex.net.

Maple, Ont., St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Gordon Timbers, 73 Fred Varley Dr., Markham, ON L3R 1S6; 905-475-6233; gtimbers@sympatico.ca.

Mississauga, Ont., Dixie Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Reid Chudley, PO Box 16, Hillsburgh, ON N0B 1Z0; 519-855-6216; r.chudley@bellnet.ca.

Mississauga, Ont., St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Peter Barrow, 24 Stavebank Rd. N., Mississauga, ON L5G 2T5; 905-278-8907; standrewspc@bellnet.ca.

Kitchener, St. Andrew's; Full-Time Minister of Pastoral Care; Interim Moderator Rev. Don McCallum, 55 Devere Dr., Guelph, ON N1G 2T3; 519-866-9400; Don@kortrightchurch.org.

Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., Westminster Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Deon Slabbert, 38 Country Club Place, Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6A 5Z9; 705-945-7885; revdeons@shaw.ca.

Thornhill, Ont., Thornhill Presbyterian; Rev. Barry Van Dusen, PO Box 264, Nobleton, ON L0G 1N0; 905-859-0843; barry.peggy.vandusen@sympatico.ca.

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West Toronto Presbytery, Celebration; Interim Moderator Dr. Larry Brice, c/o Pine Ridge Presbyterian Church, 39 Knox Ave., Toronto, ON M9L 2M2; 519-586-7711; lbrice@sympatico.ca.

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Synod of Southwestern Ontario Burlington, Knox; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Philip Wilson, c/o Trinity Presbyterian Church, 720 Ninth Ave., Hamilton, ON L8T 2A3; 905-385-5984; revpmw@auracom.com.

Flamborough, West Flamboro Presbyterian Church; Rev. James Douglas, 17 Dixon Dr., Port Dover, ON N0A 1N4; 519-583-3220; jdouglas1@sympatico.ca.

Fonthill, Kirk-on-the-Hill; Rev. Dr. Jack Neil, c/o First Presbyterian Church, 176 Elm St., Port Colborne, ON L3K 4N6; 905-834-4288.

Forest, St. James; Interim Moderator Rev. Daniel Roushorne, c/o St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, PO Box 1381, Corunna, ON N0N 1G0; 519-862-3641; sapcorunna@xcelco.on.ca.

Hamilton, MacNab St.; Rev. George Robertson, 80 Mill St. N., PO Box 221, Waterdown, ON L0R 2H0; 905-689-8115; rev.george@bellnet.ca.

Hamilton, New Westminster; Rev. R. Docherty, c/o St. John's Presbyterian Church, 10 Mountain St., Grimsby, ON L3M 3J6; 905-945-5352.

Kirkwall Presbyterian Church; Full-time minister; Interim Moderator, Rev. Bob Dawson, 2138 Brant St., Burlington, ON L7P 3W5; 905-335-2640; minister@branthills.ca.

Listowel, Knox; Senior Minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Alan Barr, c/o Atwood Presbyterian Church, PO Box 179, Atwood, ON N0G 1B0; 519-356-2551.

London, St. Lawrence; Half-time; Interim Moderator Rev. Lynn Nichol, 783 Victoria St., London, ON N5Y 4C9; 519-434-2476; briarhill33@yahoo.ca.

Molesworth, St. Andrew's; Part-time position; John Zondag, 220 Livingstone Ave. N., Listowel, ON N4W 1P9; 519-291-4690; jzondag@bellnet.ca.

Sarnia, St. Giles; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Christine O'Reilly, 7745 Alfred St., Port Franks, ON N0M 2L0; 519-243-3862; corly@execulink.com.

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Stoney Creek, Heritage Green; Half-time position; Interim Moderator Rev. Bob Geddes,

c/o The South Gate Presbyterian Church, 120 Claredon Ave., Hamilton, ON L9A 3A5; 905-385-7444; bobgeddes@mountaincable.net.

Woodstock, Knox; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Lonnie Atkinson, c/o St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, 56 Thames St. S., Ingersoll, ON N5C 2S9; 519-485-3390; stpauls@execulink.com.

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Selkirk, Man., Knox Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Robert Murray, PO Box 222, Pinawa, MB R0E 1L0; 204-753-8439; pcf@granite.mb.ca.

Winnipeg, Man., St. James; Rev. Amy Campbell, 299 Olive St., Winnipeg, MB R3J 2X5; 204-831-5561; amethyst@mts.net.

Winnipeg, Man., Westwood; Rev. Matthew Brough, Knox, 341 Eveline St., Selkirk, MB R1A 1M9; mcbroug@shaw.ca or Rev. Kevin Macdonald, St. John's, 251 Bannerman Ave., Winnipeg, MB R2W 0T8; mactamal@yahoo.co.uk.

Synod of Saskatchewan

Regina, Norman Kennedy; Rev. Eric Muirhead, 2170 Albert St., Regina, SK S4P 2T9; revfirstpres@sasktel.net.

Saskatoon, Circle West; Parkview; Rev. Amanda Currie, 436 Spadina Cres. E, Saskatoon, SK S7K 3G6; 306-242-0525; standrews@sasktel.net.

Weyburn, Knox; Interim Moderator Rev. Tae-Wook (Jonathan) Kwon; PO Box 7, Grenfell, SK S0G 2B0; 306-697-2612; joyktw@hotmail.com.

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Fort McMurray, Alta., Faith Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Lloyd Fourney, 18512 92nd Ave., Edmonton, AB T5T 1P4; 780-481-1614; fourney@hotmail.com.

Medicine Hat, Alta., St. John's Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Diane V. Beach, 212 Perry Cres. NE, Medicine Hat, AB T1C 1X3; home 403-526-3512, office 403-526-4542; dianebeach@shaw.ca.

Synod of British Columbia

Armstrong, St. Andrew's; effective July 1, 2007; Rev. Doug Swanson, 1981 9th Ave. NE, Salmon Arm, BC V1E 1M1; 250-832-7282; standrews@jetstream.net.

Nanaimo, St. Andrew's; Dr. John F. Allan, 4235 Departure Bay Rd., Nanaimo, BC V9T 1C9; jfallan@shaw.ca.

Slocan Valley, St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Rev. Gavin Robertson, c/o First Presbyterian Church, 1139 Pine Ave., Trail, BC V1R 4R2; 250-364-0335; firstpc@telus.net.

Sooke, Knox Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Kerry McIntyre, 531 Herbert St., Duncan, BC V9L 1T2; kmcintyre@standrewsduncan.org.

Vancouver, Chinese Presbyterian Church, Associate Minister (English Ministry); Interim Moderator, Rev. Diane Tait-Katerberg, c/o Chinese Presbyterian Church, 6137 Cambie St., Vancouver, BC V5Z 3B2; katerberg@dccnet.com.

Victoria, Chinese (bilingual, English/Cantonese); Rev. H. McNabb, 760 Latoria Rd., Victoria, BC V9C 3A4; hamcnabb@shaw.ca

West Vancouver, West Vancouver Presbyterian Church; Rev. R. C. (Bob) Garvin, 12225 Senda Crt., Mission, BC V4S 1B8; garvins@shaw.ca.

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OBITUARIES

CAMPBELL, Rev. Dr. Alexander M., aged 97, passed away on March 20, 2007, in Richmond Beach, Wash., after a distinguished career as an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church and executive with the synod. He raised a great family and has forever touched the heart and soul of those he served and those who met him.

Born April 8, 1909, in Dell, Que., Reverend Campbell was educated at McGill University, School of Theology, Montreal. He earned a doctorate of sacred theology from the University of Chicago and a doctor of divinity degree from Whitworth College. As a student pastor in Vancouver, B.C., he met and married his beloved Mary I. Kennedy. Their first church was in Morro Bay, Calif. Subsequent congregations and communities served include churches in Seattle, Omak and Yakima, all in Washington. For 17 years, Reverend Campbell was on the staff of the

Presbyterian Synod in Alaska and Washington and served as director of evangelism for the synod. He supported 232 churches.

Reverend Campbell will be greatly missed by his wife of 68 years, Mary; his daughters Jeannette, Joan and her husband Stephen Sundberg, Marylin and her husband Vernon Ferrel; his seven grandchildren; five great-grandchilden; and his nieces, nephews and cousins.

GAAL, Mrs. Elizabeth, aged 72; a member of First Presbyterian Church, Chatham, Ont.

GRANT, Hugh, an elder, trustee and active committee member of St. Andrew's Bolsover, Woodville, Ont., passed away on Jan. 29, 2007, at the age of 74. His quiet service will be missed.

HODGSON, Mrs. Anne, aged 67; a member of First Presbyterian Church, Chatham, Ont..

HOWARD, Ivy Hilda, born in Belfast, Northern Ireland on Sept. 7, 1928, and died peacefully in Vancouver on Jan. 25, 2007. Her life was marked by a strong sense of God's call to Christian ministry, which was carried out in Ireland, Taiwan and Canada.

Ivy received her training for church work at St. Colmns Missionary College, Edinburgh, and Ewart College, Toronto. She served as deaconess for The Presbyterian Church in Ireland, as a director of Christian education at Glenview Church, Toronto, as a missionary teacher at Tam Kang Middle School in Taiwan (1972-1975) under the Board of World Mission, and as area educational consultant in the Synod/Synodical of British Columbia (1979-1993) appointed by the Women's Missionary Society.

Ivy will be remembered for her vivacious and enthusiastic spirit. She was an effective communicator of the Gospel and an inspiration to all who worked with her. Her energy and sparkle, and her love and devotion to her Lord and Saviour, touched not only those within our Presbyterian congregations but also those among her many ecumenical contacts. Her caring concern for others continued in St. Jude's Anglican Home where she spent the last years of her life.

IMRIE, Peter, died on Jan. 21, 2007, in his 82nd year. He was a trustee and elder at St. Andrew's Bolsover, Woodville, Ont. and a former elder at St. Andrew's Eldon Station. His music was an inspiration to many congregations in our area.

MILNE, Rev. James William (Bill), died at Newmarket, Ont., in the early hours of March 31, 2007, at age 77. He had been a resident of the Mackenzie Place Extended Care Home for the past 4-1/2 years. Bill was predeceased by his wife Lucie (Goebel) in 2003.

Bill was born in Hamilton, Ont., on March 18, 1930, to Jim and Anne Marie Milne. Bill completed his elementary and secondary schooling in Hamilton and graduated from McMaster University. He was a member of St. Paul's Presbyterian Church and was involved in presbytery and synod young peoples' work. Under the mentorship of the minister of McNabb Presbyterian Church, Bill answered the call to ordained ministry.

In 1955, Bill graduated from Knox College. His first pastoral charge was in Whitewood and Broadview, Sask. Bill felt God calling him to the mission field and in 1957 The Presbyterian Church in Canada sent him to the Bhil mission field in India. Just prior to going to India, Bill attended a Work Fellowship Program in New York State where he met Lucie, the love of his life. Lucie, a nurse, was on her way to Iran to serve with the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. – she never made it! Bill and Lucie were married on Feb. 2, 1957.

Bill and Lucie worked among the Bhils, training evangelists and pastors, providing lay training and illiteracy programs and setting up the famine relief program. Prior to completing his term in 1970, Bill was instrumental in the transferring of the mission buildings of the Church of North India. During Bill and Lucie's 10 years in India, three of their four children, Ann, Jim and Dan, were born. While on furlough, Deb was born in Toronto, Ont.

In Canada, Bill served congregations in Ormstown, Que.; and in Dorchester, Guelph and Mitchell, Ont. There was a brief return to India when he and Lucie were called to teach at the seminary in Bareilly, northern India. Bill and Lucie ministered for a total of 12 years in India. Bill served on many presbytery and national church committees, including the personnel committee of International Ministries.

Bill, who had a keen interest in people, was fondly revered among the Bhils as a "spiritual doctor." He was a keen listener and observer and a strong-minded, determined pastor. In Bill's spare time, he loved travelling, curling, rooting for the Hamilton Tiger Cats, reading, listening to classical music and playing the piano. In his later years, his greatest love and joy were his grandchildren: Mikhaila and Dillon Johnson; Scott, Mason and Sarah Milne; and Michael Milne.

Bill is survived by his sister Ruth Larwood and his children Rev. Ann Blane (Robert), Jim Milne (Caroline), Debbie Johnson (Steve) and Dan Milne. To the very end, Bill remained a good and faithful servant of God: "To God be the Glory, Great Things He Hath Done."

NEIL, Mrs. Lanore, aged 88; a quilter and a long-time member of First Presbyterian Church, Chatham, Ont.

SIPPEL, Annie Jean, Oct. 10, 1905 – Apr. 7, 2007. Annie's love of family and people led her into a life-long journey of caring for the sick and terminally ill. She graduated with her nursing degree from Stratford General Hospital in 1932. Annie was a faithful and dedicated member of Knox Presbyterian Church in Embro, Ont. for nearly 90 years. On Oct. 8, 2005, she celebrated her 100th birthday with an open house at Knox which was well attended.



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Warmly Welcomed, Truly Blessed



The last epistle, from Taiwan. BY WILMA WELSH

This will be the last time you will hear from me under the heading of Message From The Moderator. The year has gone quickly and I want to take this opportunity to thank congregations, presbyteries, presbyterials, synods and synodicals, as well as individuals for the kindness they have shown me. I have such wonderful memories of my time visiting across the Church. I have been warmly welcomed. I have been truly blessed.

I also want to thank my chaplain, Rev. Thomas Kay, for his care of me, from holding my flowers, to holding my hand when afflicted with food poisoning the last day of Assembly. My home congregation of Knox, Guelph, Ont., have been very supportive and understanding and I look forward to being with them more frequently in the future.

I spent two weeks during April in Taiwan. The Women's Missionary Society also sent a delegation to visit at the same time. There were many highlights during this visit and I will name just a few:

• Representing The Presbyterian Church in Canada at the 52nd General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan. I was invited to address the court on the role of women in Canada and in the church in Canada. The theme for this year's assembly was on gender issues and congregations during the next year will emphasize "Women in the Church." The Women's Committee presented a covenant for approval at the General Assembly. The women were disappointed that it was not approved. Taiwan's vice-president brought greetings to the Assembly. They had over 40 ecumenical visitors.

• A visit with President Chen of Taiwan. The delegation from Canada along with the PCT's moderator, vice moderator, the Women's Work secretary, and the general secretary joined in the meeting. I was the sole presenter at this event. We were allowed 30 minutes but we spoke together for almost one hour. During our conversations we highlighted the issues of aboriginals in Canada and Taiwan, the role of women in society, the contribution of The Presbyterian Church in Canada missionaries to Taiwan. The President also referred to my involvement in preventing the new Taiwanese Bible from being confiscated during my time helping at the Taiwan Bible Society. The issue was also raised about Taiwan not being allowed membership in the United Nations, as well as their inability to be received as a member of the World Health Organization, even as an observer. This creates serious problems in the event of a pandemic and outbreaks of disease such as SARS.

• A visit to an aboriginal village including overnight hospitality in private homes was provided for the full delegation. We worshipped on Easter Sunday in one of the aboriginal (Bunun) churches. Three days were spent in Hualien and visiting YuShan Theological College and our missionary Murray Garvin.

• Rev. Dr. C. M. and Mrs. Ruth Kao came to Changhua to visit briefly with us. Dr. Kao was the former general secretary of the PCT who spent almost four and a half years in prison. He shared with the group that it was a blessing as it provided the opportunity for him to share the Gospel with the other prisoners. While in prison he read the Old Testament seven times and the New Testament 12 times. This was very special time for me as I had the privilege of working alongside Dr. Kao for almost six years while in Taiwan. It was during a very troublesome and difficult time for the church when Taiwan was under marshall law. As I complete my 11th epistle I want to say thank you for your support and encouragement over the year. May God bless each of you.

Blessings,



132nd General Assembly.

Moderator's Itinerary

June

2	Elder's Institute
3	Knox, Guelph, Ont.,
3-8	General Assembly, Presbytery of Waterloo-Wellington



The moderator meets with old friends in Parksville, B.C.: Rev. David Smith is now retired; and his wife Hazel is the president of the Vancouver Island WMS.


Welsh relished visiting local congregations this past year—here she's at Victoria West, PEI.

The Mission Moderator



The moderator with Dr. and Mrs. Kao, in Taiwan.

"The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade." *Mark 4: 30-32*


Welsh was a member of St. Mark, Toronto for 18 years and returned their to participate in worship during her moderatorial year. She got cake.


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(Romans 12:2)

With God's guidance, The Presbyterian Church in Canada is seeking opportunities to walk with Aboriginal peoples to find healing and wholeness together as God's people. Your Presbyterians Sharing... contributions support Native Ministries.

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2007 Christmas Cover Art Contest

The Record's second annual Christmas Art Contest is open to all those young or young at heart and to all Sunday Schools.

Send your Christmas-themed art on an 8 1/2" x 11" sheet to:
Christmas Art Contest,
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or email your high res file to:
record@presbyterianrecord.ca

Deadline: September 30



Christmas Carol Contest

The winning recordings will be featured during the month of December on our website's "hit parade" for all readers to enjoy!

For more details visit www.presbyterianrecord.ca

The *Presbyterian Record*'s Christmas Carol Contest is open to all those young or young at heart and to all Sunday Schools.

Deadline: November 15

PWS&D Poetry Contest



To celebrate our anniversary, we approached the *Record* and proposed a poetry contest to highlight the work of PWS&D. Members of St. Andrew's, Guelph, will adjudicate the submissions and the congregation will make a donation in the name of the winning entrant to PWS&D; the *Record* will publish selected submissions. All you have to do is write a poem (no epics, please; but open to all other styles). We particularly encourage youth and young-at-hearts to participate.

The poem should raise awareness for the work of PWS&D, express respect, love and compassion to those who suffer but stay away from showing pity. Respect is always a noble characteristic.

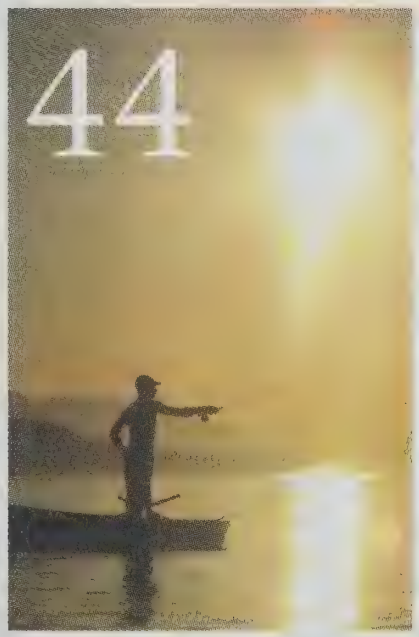
The deadline is October 31, 2007. Please send your poems to contests@presbyterianrecord.ca.



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General Assembly

The Presbyterian Record Report



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On the Cover:
Rev. Glenn Inglis votes, along with his fellow commissioners, at the 133rd General Assembly in Waterloo, Ont.

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STEALING TIME

General Assembly should be about important issues.

BY DAVID HARRIS



The pun opportunities are endless for describing the General Assembly debate over the moderator's stole: Should each new moderator wear the same symbolic stole? Who would pay for it? Who would clean it? Should there be more than one? But that's the only smile in the story. In the end, it was a headshaking event to see approximately 300 commissioners inventing yet another camel: will that be one lump or two?

Measured by any significant decisions made, the last two assemblies have been snoozers. The meeting of the church's highest court should be an agenda packed with reasonably important decisions that affect the life of the church as a whole. Housekeeping should be handled by Assembly Council, which governs between assemblies.

Not only that, annual assemblies aren't cheap. It costs about $250,000 from national coffers to run the event and likely at least that much again in costs to congregations and presbyteries. On top of this, non-clergy commissioners have to take time from work, most likely using a week of vacation, inevitably tilting the assembly in favour of retired elders.

Then there are the reports. An annual assembly means committees of the assembly (the largest being the Life and Mission Agency and its national staff) have to write annual reports about their work for commissioners. So, if they get a new or tweaked assignment, they will begin that work after summer vacations at the fall committee meeting, say sometime in September. Assuming people can get to their tasks immediately (no certain thing if the matter has any degree of complexity or requires consulting with another committee or department), they will have about five months—including the Christmas period—before they have to begin writing another report for the next assembly.

Of course job assignments overlap; the point is that the structure has imposed such onerous (probably unintended) accountability that it's hard for people to be efficient and creative in their work. It's like a company burdened with a layer of unproductive middle managers who spend their time telling the owners what the workers are up to, except in this case, the workers and middle managers are the same group and work is stifled.

Perhaps this is why assembly agreed with council's recommendation that it consult with presbyteries about moving to a biennial event. The Presbyterian Church in the United States and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada hold biennial assemblies. The Anglican and United churches each gather for national meetings every three years.

The only downside, if informal conversations with commissioners are a guide, is that some people won't get to meet their friends and associates so frequently. It's not an unimportant point. Meeting people face to face is often undervalued when technology permits more efficient ways of meeting, but it's hard to argue that much would be lost by shifting to a biennial meeting. And it would only save three per cent of the national budget every off year.

Oh, yes. The moderator's stole. Displaying adept knowledge of the rules, Rev. John Vissers of Presyterian College, Montreal, moved that, because assembly's decision could have financial implications—possibly as much as $300 a year!—the matter should be referred to assembly council. And it'll be certain to steal some time from next year's assembly.

***

Last month's editorial contained an egregious error suggesting Rick Warren (author of The Purpose Driven Life) hangs his hat at Willow Creek Church outside Chicago. Of course, his church is at Saddleback, Calif., about a half hour south of Anaheim. My apologies.

David Harris

Letters



The Greeks have a word for it

Re Speaking in Other Tongues, April

There cannot be any doubt that the native tongue of a Galilean Jew of Jesus' time was Aramaic, the lingua franca of the Near East. The Gospels, however, have not come down to us in Aramaic. Gentiles wrote them or Hellenized Jews like Paul whose first or second language was Greek—the English of the Mediterranean world. Jesus could scarcely have conducted his ministry had he not mastered Greek as a second language. Indeed Greek was every non-Greek's second language.

Aramaic could be described as "Hebrew" because it had the same look and feel—same alphabet and similar vocabulary, orthography and grammar. By Jesus' time, Hebrew was a priestly and scriptural language, not a vernacular. Jesus, like every other rabbi, would have known and could have prayed the Psalms in Hebrew. The Gospels, for their part, are replete with Aramaic words and Aramaisms, so much so that their common source may have been a now lost Aramaic document.

As for "Pilate's famous INRI superscription upon the Cross," its Latin text would have been transliterated into the two other alphabets—Greek and Hebrew—not translated into two other languages. As for the language of Peter, when in Rome Peter would have done what other non-Romans did—speak in the same Greek as the Gospels were written, and be understood by just about everyone.

BARRY CAHILL, HALIFAX

Church is ...

What is the Church? by Andrew Faiz, March, prompted me to review my definition recorded in my notes almost 50 years ago:

The Church is people
—people who believe in God as Creator
in Jesus Christ, His Son, our Saviour
in His presence in the world today through His Holy Spirit.
The Church is people—
people who believe
that God's salvation is
for all the world
and all the people in the world
The Church is people—
people who believe
that they share in the
task of proclaiming
"THE GOOD NEWS"
The Church is the Body of Christ—
individual persons
fitting together their particular gifts and abilities
to be the Church
The Church gathers in many ways to be
nourished and inspired
and to plan together
The Church goes out
—in mission to be the Church in the world.

M. FERN SIMPSON, AILSA CRAIG, ONT.

For the children

Re Vicki Homes on Divorce, March

In particular one paragraph: "Many who have gone through this (divorce) say that they believe death would be easier to deal with." As one who has dealt with the death of my husband and the father of my three young children, I can tell you it is not easier.

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I raised my children alone, with the help of my dear church family and distant brothers and sisters and distant parents. When the parents divorce, at least there is still another parent to take the kids, to love them and guide them. I understand that issues in divorced families can go on and on but please remember, if only for the children's sake, that the other parent is not dead. You can still put your arms around him or her and ask about graduation or what college to go to. Dead and buried does bring a kind of closure, but it doesn't stop the hurt of wanting your other parent.

JAN ROSSITER, HUNTSVILLE, ONTARIO

Dear Jan,

In no way would I ever begin to suggest that one is easier than the other, hence I had hoped that I had phrased it well when I wrote, "Many who have gone through this (divorce) say that they believe death would be easier to deal with." In my work I continue to uphold and pray for families and the children of divorce. As you so aptly pointed out there is an opportunity for positive relationships with the other parent. So often unfortunately, anger and bitterness stand in the way. I do not believe either situation is easier. Different but not easier. And I pray that God will uphold you and your children in the times of your deepest needs.

VICKI HOMES

The disruption, continued

Re Letters, March

One must go back to The Disruption of 1843 when preachers such as Candlist and Chalmers brought about the end of Patronage, something Knox had been unable to do because of resistance from the Nobility. This of course split the protestant church into two—Church of Scotland and the large break-away Free Church with two smaller secessions, The Auld Licht Church and the Wes Free Church—all still preaching infallibility and total Sabattarianism.

However, around 1860 new thinking which emanated from Germany appeared among the Free Church, known as "high criticism." It suggested that Genesis was nothing but a children's story written to explain the six days it took to form the Earth. Darwinism, evolution and geology were used to promote high criticism. Slowly a serious schism took place with Conservatives believing implicitly in infallibility and Sabbatarianism and the new thinking group, which took hold of this new concept and gradually infiltrated the majority of the professional chairs in the main colleges—Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen.

It was a little known fact that in Scotland there was hidden racism. This was based on the fact that the Lowlanders (south and east) treated Highlanders (west and north) as intellectually inferior. It so happened that the majority of the "Conservatives" in the Free Church were Highlanders and in 1893 broke away and formed the Free Presbyterian Church.

To get a more complete understanding of how our Free Church/Free Presbyterian Church forefathers tackled the why and wherefores of this seriously complicated subject matter it is suggested *The Scottish Historical Review Monograph No. 8 – The Second Disruption* by James Lachlan MacLeod would make worthwhile reading. Calvin Brown and Zander Dunn would find no better place to enrich their studies of biblical criticism.

ERIC FORSYTH, BARRIE, ONT.

Corrosive struggles must end

First, let me say that the March *Record* was the best I've read.

I noted the opposing views of Calvin Brown and Zander Dunn on the virginity of Mary. To be Christian, a denomination must hold a core of beliefs that affirm:

- There is an omnipotent God separate from mankind
- Jesus is God
- The imperative of a Christian Church is to seek the Kingdom of God.

After that and only after that, each

denomination can have a written or tacit mission statement.

In my view, all denominations should lean towards Diana Butler Bass's "ancient spiritual practices of hospitality, discernment, healing, contemplation, testimony, diversity, justice, worship, reflection and beauty." (She is quoted in Lynne Donovan's article A Place To Call Home.) That gives ample room for any denomination to emphasize particular injustices or art or post modernism or post colonialism or any other flavour emerging from changing technology without engaging in the corrosive struggle between "right" and "left" Christianity.

WILLIAM DUTHIE, AURORA, ONT.

The fellowship church

Ever so many years ago, I recall a parishioner saying to me: "I come home from work on Fridays and often I don't go out of the house until it's time for work on Monday morning. Sometimes I think I'll go stark raving mad—other times I'm afraid my thoughts are self-destructive."

Fellowship is one of the Greek words which describes the church in the New Testament. The word means sharing, a partnership, not selfish-getting; sharing with the less fortunate. The word also refers to anything from a business partnership to a marriage. A 19th century author, William Morris, wrote: "Fellowship is heaven and the lack of fellowship is hell." Churches ought to be the first to heal the wounds of lonely people but often we keep our distance. St. Paul says: "We are members one of another." Many suffer from the sickness of loneliness because of the breakdown of the family unit. We are not really human until we have learned to live with others. As food is a need, so we need to know that we belong, that we are wanted, accepted, understood and loved. We have to draw ourselves out of ourselves and draw ourselves to our neighbours and draw ourselves to God. We must love to be loved!

REV. EVAN H. JONES, LONDON, ONT.

A fellowship of churches

Re When Congregations Marry, May

You may be interested to learn of four denominations, Anglican, Mennonite-Conference, Presbyterian and United Church which comprise the Pinawa Christian Fellowship congregation. These denominations have been worshipping together in a school gymnasium for more that 40 years. Our current minister, Rev. Robert Murray, is a Presbyterian.

JOHN E. GUTHRIE, PINAWA, MAN.

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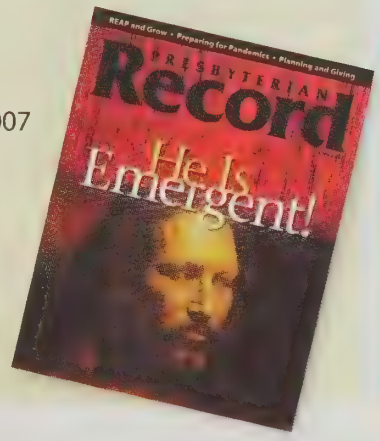
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People & Places

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What do an African drum circle, a chili dinner, a craft sale and AIDS have in common? Well, if you're from Elmwood Avenue, London, Ont., you already know these are some of the elements involved in raising awareness and $1,475 for PWS&D's Towards a World Without AIDS campaign. Amongst other efforts: three unique blankets were donated to a local AIDS hospice. Here Malcolm Campbell and Robert Green await a receipt for their donation from Carol Corman.



Grant Sayers began playing the organ for worship on May 24, 1942, at the age of 19, at St. Andrew's, Priceville, Ont. And he's still at it. After 13 ministers, many choir permutations and a serious illness two years ago, this good and faithful servant continues at the console Sunday mornings. A true minister of music; a true disciple.
For a more thorough appreciation, please see our website.



It was 40 years ago this spring when Rev. Ralph Kendall (right) was the first minister at St. Paul's, Bramalea, Ont. Current minister Rev. Wayne Baswick, and city counselor Sandra Hames help out with the anniversary cake. Rev. Stephen Kendall, who may well have been present at the first worship four decades ago, was the guest speaker. *More photos on our website.*



Niki Taylor, a member of the Sunday school at Union, Albert Bridge/Mira Ferry, N. S., has fun digging in the dirt as she and her Sunday school classmates plant the Anniversary Garden to commemorate the church's 150th year. For more photos and a schedule of their anniversary events, visit our website.



On Sunday May 6th the congregation of Haney, Maple Ridge, B.C. honoured Shirley Zeron on the occasion of her 35th anniversary as organist, pianist, choir director and 'commander in chief' of the music ministry. She has played for eight of the nine ministers in the congregation's history. Currently Shirley plays the piano as part of the regular Sunday worship team of piano, organ, trumpet, trombone, clarinet, violin and guitars. In this photo Shirley "tunes" her grand piano cake. For another photo, see our website.

Had cake lately?

Share your celebrations with the rest of the church. Send your stories to PnP@presbyterianrecord.ca along with your digital photographs, **300 dpi minimum, high quality JPEGs**. Or mail the photographs to:
The Record, 50 Wynford Dr., Toronto, M3C 1J7.

To be considered for People and Places, photographs should be sharp and everyone clearly identified. The *Record* reserves the right to reject any photos not of sufficient quality. Photographs cannot be returned.

Also on our website:

A visit to the Presbyterian Museum, serving dinner at Evangel Hall, a Ghanaian visits Anishinabe. Plus, more stories of faithful servants and ministries.



SPOTLIGHT

Rev. Linda Ashfield of Knox, Waterloo, Ont., spoke at the 174th anniversary dinner in May at St. Andrew's, Cobourg, Ont., about the 40th anniversary of the ordination of women in The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Ashfield was among the first women to live at Knox College. She was ordained in 1979.

Sharing a vision for mission at WMS

DISCUSSIONS ABOUT MISSION, new directions and the future of the Women's Missionary Society ensued at the WMS' annual council meeting in May. After the 2008 mission exposure tours (to India and Eastern Europe) were announced, Rev. Rick Fee, General Secretary of the Life and Mission Agency, shared a vision he has for mission.

"From the context of the Presbyterian Church, with an older membership, one innovative idea would see the development of programs wherein grandparents would travel to overseas destinations or other parts of Canada with their grandchildren," said Fee.

He strongly believes mission tours in Canada and overseas are tremendous opportunities for spiritual growth, shared experiences and greater awareness of socio-economic realities.

"The benefits of such an inter-generational program are innumerable," he continued. "Shared experiences of what the church actually does, the bonding between grandmothers and granddaughters, a history lesson on church missions, and practical lessons on faith in Jesus Christ in a world attracted in other directions."

Wilma Welsh, former moderator, agrees. "If we give an opportunity to a young person, they won't be lost from the church. They'll be part of the church's work. It's a challenge; to you and to me."

Though nothing concrete has been set, Fee said he would encourage collaboration between the Atlantic Mission Society, WMS and LMA to release resources to foster such an idea.

The council also heard from a Presbyterian minister and an Imam on their views of Sabbath; discussed Sabbath as it relates to justice; and, heard from missionaries Arlene Onuoha (Nigeria), David and Anna Pandy-Szekeres (Eastern Europe), and Pauline Brown, who has retired after 55 years of service in India. Council also decided on their 2008 grants to various missions, including $8,800 to various Aboriginal ministries in Canada, and $25,000 to the Pandy-Szekeres' work on experimental farms in Ukraine and Romania. –*AM* ■

Minister awarded 10 years back pay

Human rights commission orders reinstatement.

BY AMY MACLACHLAN

THE PRESBYTERY OF P.E.I. is appealing an "unprecedented" decision by the province's human rights commission to pay more than $600,000 in damages to Rev. Gael Matheson—damages for which, the commission's executive director says, members of presbytery may be "personally responsible."

In its decision on damages released in May, the commission also ordered presbytery to find Matheson a new job. In August 2006, the commission said it accepted Matheson's claim that her pastoral tie was severed because she is a woman.

The damages are the highest ever awarded by the commission. Presbytery had offered about $100,000 to cover a year's salary and legal fees.

"It's unprecedented," said Alex Godfrey, lawyer for the presbytery. "It's a very unusual award, and it is much higher than normal." But Matheson's lawyer, Peter Ghiz, said the damages were "simple mathematics." "We looked at her past income and what was lost over the years, and we came to that figure."

Commission executive director Greg Howard said that individuals could bear some of the blame. "As an unincorporated association, presbytery is no more than its individual members," he said. "So every name of every individual person who sat on presbytery during this case could potentially be held personally responsible."

While presbyteries now have insurance to protect its members, when this issue first arose more than 10 years ago, presbyteries were not covered for such liabilities.

Litigation began in 1996 when Matheson, who had served at the Murray Harbour North pastoral charge since 1983, was fired. Presbytery says it was because the pastoral tie was beyond repair after years of confrontation and strained relationship. Matheson says it was sexual discrimination. It was her first ministerial position.

She said harassment began as early as 1986. She was stalked, sent anonymous letters expressing opposition to female ministers and accused of sexual abuse and being in a lesbian relationship. She said during this time presbytery failed to act when she made her complaints known—all because she is a woman.

"It's unprecedented ... It's a very unusual award, and it is much higher than normal"

"The ultimate damage occurred when the church [Matheson] had grown up in and wished to minister within removed her ability to make a living or follow her calling," the human rights panel said in awarding damages. "It is clear to the panel that Rev. Matheson has endured public humiliation that will stay with her for the rest of her life."

Presbytery has asked the P.E.I. Supreme Court to review both the damages and the hearings. Godfrey said the main concerns are the amount of the award and the reinstatement.

Ghiz said he understands the church sees ministry as a call, but reiterated the panel's ruling that presbytery has to find a new position for Matheson "acceptable to her." He said Matheson won't comment until the case is settled.

"Just because you're a religious organization, doesn't allow you to circumvent the normal rules," said commission director Howard. "What the panel has said all along, and other churches should take note, is that churches with a structure like the Presbyterian Church do not get a by because its structure does not allow for the decision-making that employers normally make."

Placing the 60-year-old Matheson into a new position poses a particular problem for a denomination in which ministers are called by congregations not placed by presbytery. "We're at the mercy of the court system to see what they decide, " said presbytery clerk Rev. Paula Hamilton.

Matheson brought several appeals to General Assembly in 1996, which were dealt with over the next two years through a special commission. Matheson disagreed with the commission's terms of reference and refused to present her case or show up to the meetings. As a result, her complaints were abandoned. She took her case to the human rights commission in 1998, which rejected her case twice. On an appeal, a P.E.I. judge ordered the case heard.

There are currently five female ministers serving charges in the presbytery, and both the presbytery clerk and moderator are women. The interim minister who followed Matheson was also a woman, and there have been as many as seven female ministers (of 15 charges) at one time since her dismissal.

General Assembly approved the ordination of women in 1966, but still allowed existing churches and clergy to exercise a "liberty of conscience" when making a call. That right ended in 1990. ■

Knox College strengthens a Cuban partnership

KNOX COLLEGE FACULTY visited the Evangelical Seminary of Theology in Matanzas, Cuba, in May to discuss a renewed partnership between the two schools, including a yearly trip to Cuba that will help students from both schools gain a broader perspective on the role and struggles of the church around the world.

Rev. Dr. Dorcas Gordon, Knox's principal, and Rev. Dr. Charles Fensham, professor of systematic theology, were among the visitors. In a press release, Fensham said the student trips will be an opportunity to strengthen relations between the two institutions because the Canadian students will be able to learn about the Cuban culture, and reflect on two current theological contexts.

The relationship with Knox began in 2001 when an agreement was signed that made student exchanges from Canada and sabbatical leaves for Cuban faculty a priority. The partnership, however, didn't take off as many had hoped, according to Gordon. But when the seminary's new president, Rev. Dr. Reinerio Arce Valentin came to Canada in fall 2005 to teach for one term at Emmanuel College in Toronto, the Knox-SET partnership took on new life.

"He and I spoke on a number of occasions as to how the partnership between our two institutions might grow and deepen," Gordon told the *Record*. "A new partnership agreement was signed last May, and a five year commitment has been made."

The first group of Knox students will travel to Cuba next February, sponsored in part by International Ministries, Knox's bursary and scholarship resources, and possibly the Women's Missionary Society. While the 10-day trip does not count as a course credit, it will be a required component for graduation from Knox's Master of Divinity Program. Gordon said she anticipates about 20 students participating in the exchange each year, along with two faculty members.

The partnership also includes sponsoring students (along with the United Church, Emmanuel College and International Ministries) from Cuba taking doctoral studies in Toronto, in preparation for returning to Cuba to teach at the seminary. In the future, the schools hope that faculty from Cuba will teach in the Knox summer courses and be able to take advantage of the library facilities at the Toronto School of Theology.

The SET was created in 1946 by Presbyterian, Methodist and Episcopal (Anglican) members, is the only ecumenical seminary in Cuba, and the only one that grants degrees in ministry. *–Amy MacLachlan* ■

Lutherans, Anglicans reject same-sex blessings

REV. SUSAN JOHNSON was named the first female national bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. "I'm just overwhelmed by this incredible honour," Johnson said after her election in June at the denomination's national convention in Winnipeg. She will succeed National Bishop Raymond Schultz, who will retire in September.

The Anglican Church of Canada, meeting in Winnipeg at the same time as the ELCIC, elected Bishop Fred Hiltz as its new primate, or national leader.

Hiltz, bishop of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island defeated Bishop Victoria Matthews of Edmonton in the final ballot. If Matthews had been elected, she would have been the first woman to become an Anglican archbishop.

Both denominations rejected proposals to approve ceremonies of blessing for same-sex unions. The general synod of the Anglican Church of Canada narrowly defeated a resolution that would have allowed dioceses to decide for themselves whether or not to bless same-sex unions.

"I think everyone's a loser. Traditional Christians can't take comfort in the vote and those who want to move on are held back by a small number of bishops," said Bishop Michael Ingham, who in 2002 approved a same-sex blessing ceremony for his Diocese of New Westminster.

The Lutherans defeated a proposal to introduce same-gender blessings by a vote of 200 to 181. The Lutheran convention in 2005 defeated a similar proposal.

The issue of same-gender blessings came before the churches, in part, as a result of Canada's parliament making civil marriages for gay couples legal.

If delegates at the Anglican meeting had voted in favour of the proposal, it would have put the Canadian church at odds with most of the 77 million-member worldwide Anglican Communion. ■

–Ecumenical News International

Extending outreach to French Quebec

BORN A ROMAN CATHOLIC in Italy, he joined a Presbyterian church only five years ago in Montreal, and now Giancarlo Fantechi has accepted a call as minister of Word and Sacrament at La Mission St-Paul, a French outreach in Sherbrooke, Que., after graduating with distinction in the Master of Divinity program at Presbyterian College.

Fantechi spent a decade working in finance in Italy. In his twenties he first encountered the reformed tradition, joining the Italian Waldensian Church. After his arrival in Montreal he eventually found his way to the Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul, which he joined in 2002.



Giancarlo Fantechi

The Presbyterian Church's St. Paul's Mission was begun under the wing of St. Andrew's, Sherbrooke, to serve new French-speaking families. Originally settled by United Empire Loyalists and immigrants from the British Isles, Quebec's Eastern Townships had long had a very English population that was well served by many protestant churches including St. Andrew's. In the past three decades, demographic shifts and political circumstances have dramatically increased the percentage of French speakers in the area. The region's scenery, reputable schools and economic growth have particularly attracted young families.

Presbytery members, ministers from neighbouring Montreal congregations, family and friends were present for the ordination service held at the Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul. Fantechi pronounced the benediction in English, French and Italian.
–Joel Coppieters ■



Growing up in the village of Baula in northern Malawi, Beauty dreamed of one day becoming a nurse. It seemed to her to be an impossible dream. At the age of eight, Beauty lost her mother and father to AIDS and she and her four siblings moved in with their grandmother Gogo. Resourceful and hardworking, Gogo walked 4 hours a day to sell eggs at the market in the nearby village of Ekwendeni, but she barely earned enough to feed her grandchildren, let alone send them to school.

It was at the market that Gogo met the coordinator of Ekwendeni Hospital's AIDS program and she heard about how the hospital's orphan care program was expanding, with support from PWS&D. The hospital provided Gogo and her family with seed and fertilizer, and helped pay for the children's school fees and supplies. With the same spirit of determination and perseverance as her grandmother, Beauty studied hard and was recently accepted to the Ekwendeni Nursing College, a competitive program that has limited spots for new students each year.

Share hope. Support PWS&D.

PWS&D is the development, relief and refugee sponsorship agency of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Thank you to all individuals and congregations whose financial support is essential to our work.

For more information or to make a donation, write or call:

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Mission at CBS

THE CANADIAN BIBLE SOCIETY appointed Rev. Ted Seres as its new national director in June. Seres, former outreach ministries staff with the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, envisions a new direction for the society.

"Our mission statement is 'translating, publishing, distributing and encouraging the use of God's Word.' That is what we are all about," said Seres in a press release. "But it is a new day for us in living out that mission."

He said the society will more aggressively search out "partnerships with churches and like-minded organizations." Seres, who has been associated with the CBS for about nine years, wants the society to become an "extension of the church, and not a para-church organization."–*AM with files from CBS* ■

Pushing G8 leaders

The Presbyterian Church's Rev. Rick Fee was one of more than 570 religious leaders and activists who signed a letter to the heads of the G8, asking them to act on the promises they made in 2005 to help eradicate HIV and AIDS.

"We call upon you to fulfill your stated goals of supporting a global response to HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria that achieves universal access to comprehensive prevention programs, treatment, care and support by 2010," states the letter, which coincided with the G8's 2007 June meeting in Germany.

The letter noted that because of a lack of commitment to these promises, "more than 75 per cent of people urgently needing life-saving treatment are not receiving it, and, last year, three million people died of AIDS-related illnesses." *–AM with files from the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance* ■

First woman elder dies



ONE OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH in Canada's first woman elders died on June 15. Joan McInnis (nee Watkin) was an elder at St. Andrew's, Arthur, Ont. McInnis was ordained on the same day as Mrs. J.M. Thomas of Fallingbrook Church, Scarborough. They were ordained in 1966, the same year General Assembly gave the go-ahead for women to hold such positions.

Rev. Dr. Robert Spencer, who came to the charge when McInnis was about six months into her eldership, recalls her as "a caring, gracious, and faith filled person, who was devoted to her family and the church."

"My wife and I felt it an honour to have one of the first two women elders in our pastorate," Spencer told the *Record*. "She was a gifted and dedicated elder throughout my ministry."

McInnis was a WWII bride who came to Canada with her husband Norman, who was an active participant at St. Andrew's. She served in the choir, was part of a long-standing bible study and prayer group and various women's groups, and helped with "every luncheon or dinner that needed willing hands."

"We could count on her support in so many ways," said Spencer, "in everything from words of encouragement and prayer to babysitting our young family or performing a humorous skit in our special choral concerts."

McInnis, born in 1925, raised four daughters and had nine grandchildren and 18 great-grandchildren.

"Her faithfulness lives on in them all," said Spencer.-*AM* ■

CFGB welcomes new partners

THE CANADIAN FOODGRAINS BANK welcomed Catholic and Anglican agencies into its membership, making it one of the most ecumenical organizations in Canada working to end world hunger. It now represents almost all Christian denominations in the country, including 15 evangelical, mainline protestant, and catholic churches, with more than 17,000 congregations and parishes connected to the effort.

The decision was made at a bi-annual board meeting in Winnipeg in June, where members voted unanimously to accept the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace, and the Primate's World Relief & Development Fund of the Anglican Church of Canada.

"We're very excited about this," said the Presbyterian Church's Rick Fee, chair of the board of directors. "As Canadians we should be very proud of this joint Christian witness in the world. We should never underestimate or down-play the vital role that the Foodgrains Bank is being called to fulfill in today's hungry world."

Last year, with a budget of $24.8 million, 56 CFGB projects in 17 countries benefited 1.3 million people.

"The Foodgrains Bank is Canada's primary non-governmental organization involved in food programming overseas," said executive director Jim Cornelius. "With two new members at the table with us, even more work can be done." ■

228 Remembered

Sixtieth anniversary of Taiwan's defining moment.

BY MICHAEL STAINTON

THE 228 MASSACRE of up to 20,000 Taiwanese by Chinese KMT troops is the defining moment of modern Taiwanese history. It gave birth to the Taiwan Independence movement, and still casts a shadow over Taiwan's politics. Canadian missionaries were among the few foreign witnesses to this tragedy, and Presbyterians among its victims. The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan has played a key role in helping Taiwan come to terms with this memory.

This year was the 60th anniversary on February 28 (hence, 228). A protest held on that date, in 1947, led Chiang Kai-shek to send troops to Taiwan. Intellectuals and students were especially targeted. George William Mackay (son of George Leslie Mackay) arrived at the Tamsui Middle School on March 7. There had been trouble in Taiwan he was told. At dawn on March 11, army troops came for Principal Tan and teacher Ng. A third teacher, Lo Ui, was shot as he tried to help Tan.

Mackay reported on the massacre and, for the first time, presented the Taiwanese cry for help from the UN to the world. Mackay reported: "The Formosan is genuinely eager that the Island come under UN Mandate," and "The remedy would be simple, granting all Formosans the right to vote for what form of Government they desired and 98 per cent would vote United Nations."

The letter seems to have had no effect in the one church in the one country that might have presented the Taiwanese case to the new United Nations. For 60 years it sat forgotten in The Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives.

In Taiwan, a 40-year martial law and "white terror" cast a pall of silence on a whole people. Even the word "228" was banned. In February 1987, the Presbyterian weekly *Taiwan Church News* became the first paper to break the silence with a special issue. It was confiscated by the Garrison Command. In response, the Presbyterian Church took to the street and, for the first time as a church, held a demonstration demanding return of the paper. Amazingly, they were successful, and the Garrison Command had to reprint and mail out the entire issue.

In 2007, Taiwanese in Canada commemorated the 60th anniversary of 228 with a series of events in Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa. PCC Moderator Wilma Welsh and other former Canadian missionaries to Taiwan attended events in Toronto.

Prof. Michael Stainton is at York University's Centre for Asian Studies. ■



March 7, 1947, G.W. Mackay with the faculty of the Tamsui Middle School.

BUILDING HOPE

Hi, my name is Samantha and I am 12 years old.

I am so excited to tell you that I am going to Winkler Bible Camp again this year. Every year, kids from Flora House get to go to camp.

Camp is awesome. We do so many great things. My best activity is Tarzan roping. Swinging through the air is amazing. I am so free then. Sometimes we dress up and put on a play. We have so much fun being different characters.

WICM

I like the Bible Study. It makes me think about how **God loves me.**

My cabin mates are my best friends and the leaders are awesome.

Thanks for helping me go to camp!

Every year, through a grant from The Winnipeg Foundation, children and families spend time at camp.

Can you help? Your donation will make it possible to send more children to have an awesome summer experience.

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UCC/US studies divestment

ENI—The United Church of Christ in the United States argues it has not changed its policy on the Middle East after accepting a resolution that its executive council consider "ongoing balanced study, commentary and critique" about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The resolution at the denomination's June synod meeting said the study should examine whether the church should give further support to calls for selective divestment from companies the UCC says profit from activities perpetuating conflict in the region, as well as calls for an end to the so-called Israeli "security barrier."

The Institute on Religion and Democracy, an advocacy group that in the past has criticized UCC policies on the Middle East as being unfair to Israel, welcomed the latest resolution. It said it was "a major step toward even-handed treatment of Palestinian and Israeli interests."

However, a UCC spokesperson said the UCC had not "in any way backtracked" on its previous statements on the Middle East, including one that urged a "fair and just two-state solution for both Palestine and Israel."

Concrete faith

ENI—More people in the world are living in cities than ever before, and this is leading to renewed interest in religion, according to a new UN report.

"Rapid urbanisation was expected to mean the triumph of rationality, secular values and the demystification of the world, as well as the relegation of religion to a secondary role. Instead, there has been a renewal in religious interest in many countries," the United Nations Population Fund says in its report, *The State of World Population 2007*.

The growth of new religious movements is primarily an urban phenomenon, the report notes.

The report points to "Islam in the Arab region, Pentecostal Christianity in Latin America and parts of Africa, and the cult of Shivaji in parts of India." In China, where cities are growing at a breakneck pace, religious movements are fast gaining adherents, the report adds.

By 2008, more than half the world's current 6.7 billion people will live in cities, the report states. It says that by then, though mega-cities—urban areas with more than 10 million inhabitants—will continue to grow, most people will be living in cities of 500,000 or fewer.

Salman's Sir insensitive

ENI—Church groups in Pakistan and India have condemned Britain's decision to honour author Salman Rushdie with a knighthood, and claimed it risks inflaming hatred against Christians in their countries.

"The British government should have been more sensitive to the feelings of the Muslims. This is a very bad decision," said Victor Azariah, general secretary of the National Council of Churches in Pakistan, with four Protestant churches. "Such insensitive decisions will only worsen the anti-Christian feelings in the Muslim world."

Indian-born Rushdie angered Muslims in many parts of the world with his 1988 book, *The Satanic Verses,* which is named after 10 controversial verses in the Koran. Rushdie was accused of insulting Islam, and had to go into hiding after Iran's late spiritual leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, issued a religious edict, or fatwa, declaring a death sentence against the author.

More than 30 Christians have been shot and killed in Pakistan following the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan to oust the Taliban regime then in control.

In India, the National Council of Churches has stated that Britain should have exercised "restraint" in honouring Rushdie.

The dramatic Bible

ENI—A Japanese theologian has made an unlikely connection between the Bible and the classical Japanese drama form called Noh. In *Noh Drama And The Bible—Stories Of Women That Resonate With Each Other,* Yuko Yuasa identifies five heroines of Noh drama who, she says, are related to female characters in the Bible.

The Biblical figures range from Miriam in the Old Testament to Mary Magdalene in the New Testament. "The five pairs resonate in the hope brought by the power to change negativeness into positiveness," says Yuasa.

Noh is a classical Japanese form of performance that dates from the 14th century. It combines elements of dance, drama, music and poetry. It features, with slow movements and distinctive masks, gods, warriors, beautiful women, contemporary figures and supernatural beings.

Yuasa is a member of the United Church of Christ in Japan, and a graduate of the International Christian University in Tokyo. She has also studied theology at Edinburgh University in Scotland and San Francisco Theological Seminary.

Yuasa describes parallels between the Old Testament character Miriam, who is sometimes thought to be the sister of Moses, and Ameno Uzume, the legendary Japanese singer, dancer and goddess, who is found in the nation's earliest literary works. "Miriam, like Ameno Uzume, led her people by song and dance. The effectiveness of her leadership is as great as her Japanese counterpart." ■

Gobbledeegook, Awkward, Unclear

Seeking the truth at General Assembly. BY ANDREW FAIZ

The following is an email exchange I had with a commissioner in the weeks following this year's General Assembly.

Dear Andrew,

In thinking about the debates at General Assembly, it seems that in the immediacy of what's happening on the floor, truth is hard to find, even in our own hearts. I'm sorry we didn't seem to get to the truth of several debates and I'm sorry for the way each of those motions were voted on. I still might have voted the same had the truth been spoken, but now I'll never know! And, we sometimes seemed to defend the status quo because we didn't want to waste time exploring a new option. That 'saving time' issue to me, is a HUMAN fallacy whereas God can take all the time in the world to get to the 'truth.'

Blessings,
A Commissioner

Dear A Commissioner,

Courts have been known to reverse themselves; for example, women's ordination, where the court reconsidered and reconsidered and reconsidered; and then in the 80s there was a move to reconsider again and the court moved on. Our polity gives people the semblance of expressing themselves as well as allowing them to express themselves.

God Bless,
Andrew

Dear Andrew,

Ideas on the floor seem to come out like gobbledeegook, they are awkward and unclear. There was heated debate about the Ecumenical and Interfaith Committee's changing its mandate. *[This is discussed in detail by Roberta Clare and Calvin Brown later in this issue.-Ed.]* My understanding of that debate came from the one-hour journey home with my minister; and between the two of us we were able to determine what people were actually trying to say. But that certainly didn't hit me on the floor of assembly ... so did I vote correctly? ... I don't know. (Let's hope we have healing on THAT issue!)

Anywho, that was part of what I took away from assembly.

The great part? Was meeting people from across Canada and getting to know people from my own presbytery better. That was dynamic and alive and wonderful!

A Commissioner

Dear Commish,

Truth is a slippery thing. Your truth is not my truth: even the 'truths' we share, we interpret differently.

Andrew

Dear A,

I have talked with someone else regarding speaking truth at GA. They said, and I think this is more accurate, that people spoke the truth for them ... that they didn't necessarily articulate the truth well on the floor of assembly so we could know exactly the heart of their concern ... THAT was the problem.

It wasn't that they missed the truth when they spoke (which I suppose suggests they are doing the opposite of speaking the truth (lying?) ... which is NOT what I meant). In this way, this made the most hotly debated issues difficult. Some of us NEVER understood the opposition clearly, which means we NEVER saw the problems.

So I get to vote for the motion as I see it, while dismissing 'word-mongering' folks as inconsequential, when their truth remained unspoken, hidden and thus, left me truly in the dark about how I was voting.

A Commissioner

Commissioner, dude, relax! Please!

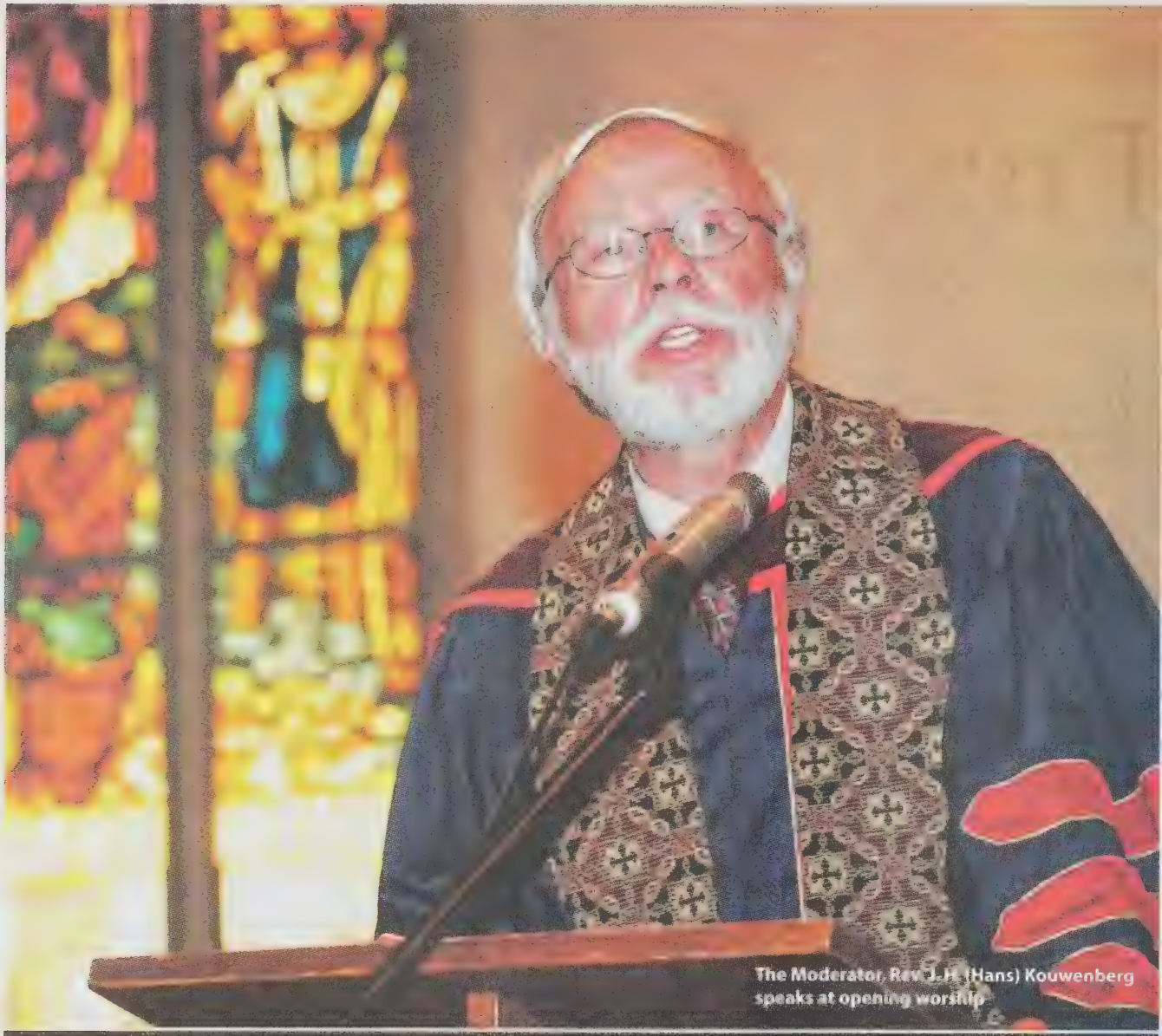
There are 300 commissioners on the floor. Each is, variously, going through the very (VERY) same process you are. But, in the numbers there is truth! You make the set of decisions as you see best. You made judgement calls, based on your experience and voted accordingly.

In short, it's not about you. At all.

Your vote was one of many others. You voted a certain way, others voted a certain way. Based on what you heard. And you heard a lot of stuff! A lot of it! Some clear, clean. Some messy. Some confused. Some brilliant. Some stupid. You filtered all that into a decision; and that decision was one-three-hundreths (or thereabouts) of the decisions on the floor.

That's the truth.

A. ■



The Moderator, Rev. J. H. (Hans) Kouwenberg speaks at opening worship

133RD General Assembly

Waterloo, Ontario June 3-8, 2007

"I want to see a mighty flood of justice; a torrent of doing good." *Amos 5:24*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANDREW FAIZ

Presby Cool

A report from the 133rd General Assembly. BY ROBERTA CLARE

Three hundred commissioners gathered for the 133rd General Assembly at the University of Waterloo's Columbia Icefield complex. And, the early sederunts (a fancy Latin word meaning 'sittings') proceeded so coolly that Moderator J.H. (Hans) Kouwenberg quipped this might be one of the shortest meetings of the highest court of The Presbyterian Church in Canada in recent years.

But this was not to be.

The first recommendation to catch the imagination of the assembly was not a burning theological issue but the commissioning of a stole (the fancy scarf-like item worn at worship by ministers) for moderators to wear. Commissioners expressed more concern about germs than tradition as they debated how the stole should pass from one moderator to the next. ("Presbyterians don't do symbols," whispered a neighbouring commissioner, who sadly decided not to introduce his theological concern to the court.) Eventually a motion, introduced in a tone of mockery, referred the matter back to assembly council, which had previously been requested to prepare it. There was a collective sigh of relief in the court.

Certainly the lighter, celebratory note was easily sustained given the calibre of short addresses from such notables as Ernie Regehr, co-founder of Project Ploughshares and recipient of the E.H. Johnson Award, Lois Wilson, president of the World Council of Churches and first woman moderator of The United Church of Canada, and international visitors from Cuba, India, and China.

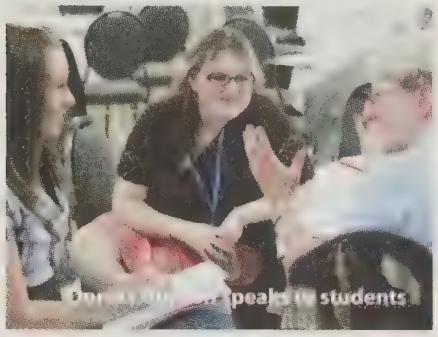
But it was Muslim leader Imam Hamid Slimi, chair of the Canadian Council of Imams, who charmed commissioners with his openness, graciousness and reference to Calvin's doctrine of predestination ("I thought Calvin had settled the question!") Slimi's wit and humour quickly won over many commissioners and possibly influenced later debate over understanding the difference between evangelism and interfaith dialogue in an effort to redefine that mandate for the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee.

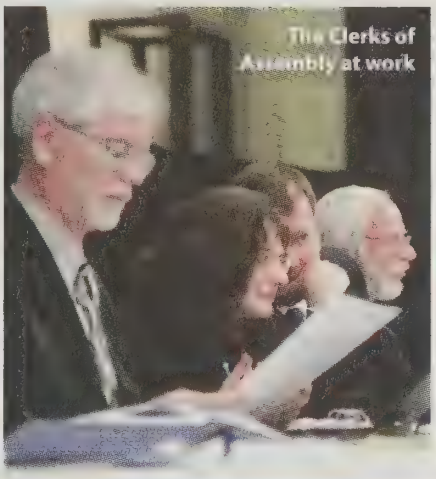
As debate over two recommendations from the Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations heated up on Wednesday, questions about process emerged. "There is an unsettled spirit in the court," confided one commissioner on Wednesday morning. "Some commissioners seem to have trouble accepting the will of the court as their will."

The assembly calmed the first "unsettled spirit" with due process. The court reaffirmed its decision to mandate the History Committee rather than the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee "to discern an effective way to mark the 500th Anniversary of Calvin's birth".

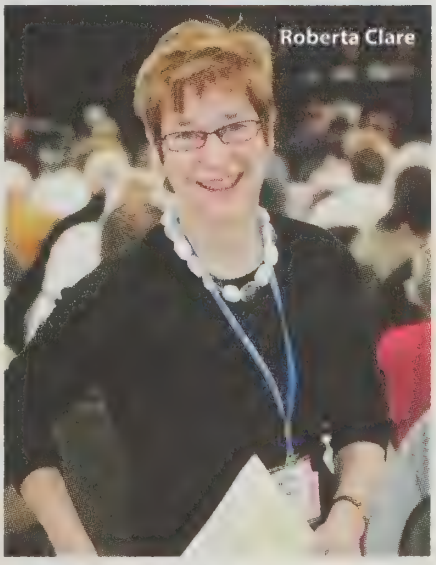
By Thursday noon, it was clear that the second "unsettled spirit" in the court was not to be appeased so quickly and commissioners braced themselves to bed down on the plastic residence mattresses for another night.

By early Friday morning, temperatures had already climbed above 30 Celsius and commissioners prepared to vote (again!) to change the mandate of the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee. In his opening remarks, Mark Lewis, convenor of the committee, reassured the young ➤





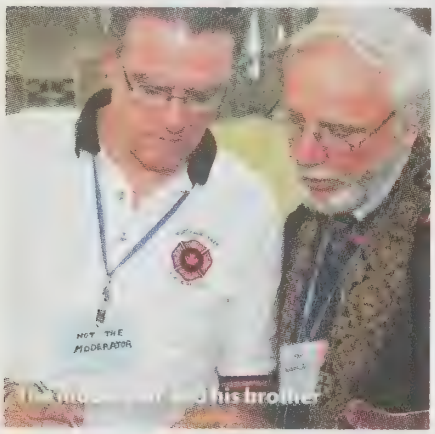




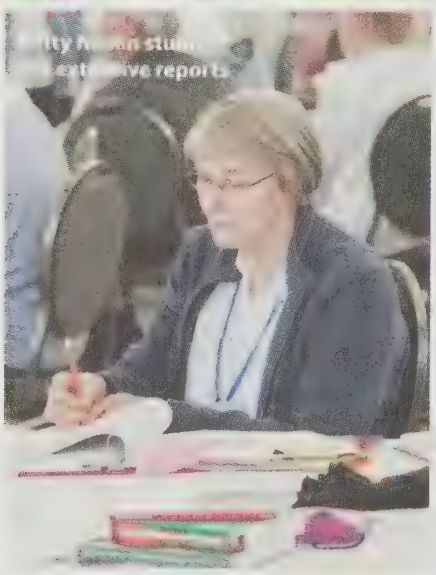
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adult observers that they would witness how Presbyterians can disagree on theological issues and continue to love one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. In other words, cool Presbyterian reserve was about to be tested by heated and impassioned debate.

Can Presbyterians engage in interfaith dialogue and retain their distinct faith identity and tradition? The process, not the speeches answered the question as the court moved into committee of the whole (allowing for less formal debate and discussion) and the moderator facilitated the Mennonite model of conflict resolution "to ensure every voice be heard in the debate." In the end, the court affirmed its decision to define more explicitly interfaith dialogue: "It is our interfaith mandate to encourage Presbyterians to acknowledge, understand and appreciate other faith traditions, and to help Presbyterians to live in good relationship with persons who belong to other religions; noting by the word 'acknowledge' we mean, 'accept the existence of', by the word 'understand' we mean, 'perceive the intended meaning of'; and by the word 'appreciate' we mean 'recognize the value or significance of'."







So, was the final sederent a waste of time? Not at all. Unwittingly, commissioners had supported both the spirit and intent of the recommendation. The debate served as a case study to demonstrate how Presbyterians can borrow the tools of another tradition (in this case Mennonite) to make Presbyterian polity shine brighter. Every voice in the debate was heard; Presbyterian tradition had not been compromised. More important, cool Presbyterian decorum had prevailed under sweltering conditions in the Icefield!

Now, with the adjournment of the final sederent in sight, the moderator relaxed in his chair and declared with some pride (and relief, no doubt) that commissioners had "seen it all"—amendments to amendments, calls for the question and the committee of the whole.

Overall, this assembly expressed confidence in decisions concerning social justice and mission. Highlights include the International Affairs Committee report on migrants, and the endorsement of the document from the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, *Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth*. The assembly voted to encourage Presbyterians to write letters to government officials calling for measurable targets and a timeline to reduce poverty, address social assistance, the minimum wage, national housing and employment assistance. The moderator will urge the Prime Minister to implement the financial commitments in education, health, housing and infrastructure, economic opportunities, and relationships and accountability established at the 2005 meeting of Canada's First Ministers and Aboriginal leaders in Kelowna, B.C. The assembly also asked presbyteries and sessions to pressure the Canadian government to meet its commitment to make inexpensive generic medicines available to poor countries in order to combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic, tuberculosis and malaria.

Pauline Brown, the longest serving PCC missionary, honoured for her 55-year ministry in India, offered the greatest piece of wisdom at this assembly as she urged all Presbyterians, "Let us reason with our heads and our hearts."

In the fall, Presbyteries will study the draft policy on racial harassment, the implications of moving to biennial assemblies, and the document, *The Canadian Churches Responsibility to Protect*. Next year's assembly will also receive the work of a joint task group on the theology of the ordination to ministry of Word and Sacraments, a report on pastoring elders, and a report from the International Affairs committee "on the connection we have as Christians and Canadians with the people of Israel and Palestine."

And, of course, commissioners will hear more about the moderatorial stole. How will we ever keep our cool Canadian Presbyterian reserve under wraps?

Roberta Clare is Director of the Elders' Institute at St. Andrew's Hall, Vancouver and adjunct faculty at The Vancouver School of Theology. She was a commissioner from the Presbytery of Westminster. ■

In Brief ...

- Overtures regarding the Korean translation of *Living Faith* and *The Book of Forms*, and simultaneous Korean translation during future General Assemblies were referred to Assembly Council.

- The Presbyteries of St. John and Miramichi will amalgamate, effective Sept. 16, 2007. The new presbytery will be known as the Presbytery of New Brunswick.

- The Women's Missionary Society and the Atlantic Mission Society have both ushered in new presidents. Druse Bryan succeeds Margaret McGillivray, who served the WMS for three years, and Helen Humphreys will be replaced by Ann Taylor at the AMS.

- The UN policy on the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) deals with the right of the international community to step into another country when it sees extreme human rights abuses taking place. The policy was adopted by the World Council of Churches last year and deals with prevention, protection and rehabilitation. After much debate, the assembly decided that presbyteries, sessions and synods be requested to discuss the document *The Canadian Churches and the Responsibility to Protect* and submit their comments to the International Affairs Committee by Dec. 31, 2007.

- The assembly re-iterated the fact that costs to ministers for study leave should not be considered part of the minister's stipend, but additional payment from the congregation. A sentence was removed from *The Book of Forms* to clarify this understanding.

- The revised policies on professorial and executive stipends—which are now separate policies—were approved. Assembly Council will recommend any future changes to the grid to the General Assembly.

- An increase in travel allowance for multiple-point charges was approved, and is effective Jan. 1, 2007. The change—an increase to 35 cents/kilometre from 30—brings the allowance more in line with the increasing costs of travel that have taken place since 1994.

- A draft policy on racial harassment, which offers guidelines on how congregations should deal with such incidents, will be sent to presbyteries and sessions for study and report by Feb. 28, 2008.

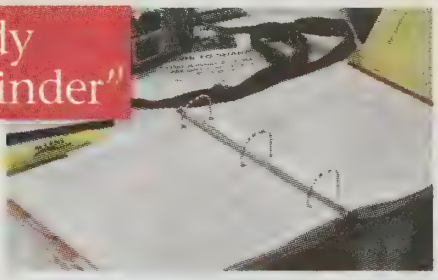
- Any savings achieved by the reduction in the church's compensation contribution under the overall settlement agreement on residential schools will be used only for healing and reconciliation initiatives.

- The assembly endorsed the World Alliance of Reformed Churches' document *Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth*. The Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee was instructed to create a study guide on the long and sometimes confusing document. The church was invited to "seriously examine" the implications of the document with respect to global economics and ecological contexts.

- The history committee has been asked to discern an effective way to commemorate the 500th anniversary of Calvin's birth in 2009. The Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee had proposed a five-year plan, which was defeated by the assembly. ➤

How to be a commissioner:

Mastering General Assembly









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- Presbyterian World Service and Development thanked congregations for supporting its Towards a World Without AIDS campaign (which surpassed $1 million in donations), and for their overall generosity over the last year. The assembly agreed to keep the issues of HIV and AIDS before the church. Rev. Rick Fee, former PWS&D director and now General Secretary of the Life and Mission Agency, was thanked for initiating the campaign, and Karen Plater, who will go from being PWS&D's communications coordinator to associate secretary for stewardship and education for mission, was thanked for her dedication and hard work.

- The Pensions and Benefits Board will not index PCC pensions in order to protect the fund's sustainability, and prevent members from having to pay pension increases that would benefit those who are retired but never had to pay the higher amounts. Also, pension plan members can now postpone receiving their pension to age 71, a change from the previous 69. The change reflects the federal government's decision to do away with the mandatory age of retirement, which was set at 65.

- Every congregation is encouraged to study the document Sunday Schools In 2007: Does It Still Work? The document notes that growing Sunday schools have good teachers, focus on connecting with families, offer staff support, offer something new, are Christ-centred and Biblically-based, and take the current context seriously.

- In a response to growing concerns about the environment and how the church can be an example, congregations were encouraged to have an energy audit of their buildings and to implement energy conservation measures that are financially feasible.

- Candidates for ministry must comply with the church's Leading With Care standards, which includes volunteer police screening checks.

- Congregations were encouraged to establish clear policies for handling planned gifts, to review these policies regularly, to share these policies with the planned giving office, and designate one Sunday during the year to planned giving. ■



Student representatives of the three colleges



Imam Hamid Slimi

Varied Voices

Thoughts, comments, retirements and appreciation.

"I marvel as I look out among you at such a disparate and varied group. You are young and old, come from all corners of the nation and world, but you are also one. Your passion and perception is a credit to your congregations and presbyteries."

PETER MCDONALD, STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE, PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE.

"I often thought I had the best portfolio of all: stewardship, where you get to talk about gratitude and generosity, the primary orientations of the Christian life; and mission, the very reason for the church's existence..."

ANNEMARIE KLASSEN, RETIRING, ASSOCIATE SECRETARY

"Our faith in action as Christians is demonstrated by the way we conduct ourselves outside of worship, by how we treat our neighbours near and far, by how we express our mission—not as one of a heroic exercise of the powerful acting in charity for the benefit of the poor, but rather following the humble model of Christ, of selfless sacrifice, devotion, service and working in community with others."

KEN KIM, DIRECTOR, PWS&D

"We are all the sons of Adam and Eve and we are all the creation of God. He is perfect. Therefore, his message is one to all mankind. The more we are involved in talking to one another, we find we are all human beings; we have the same interests, the same ambitions. That is why we're working hard in the Canadian context to build bridges and to


Ernie Regehr and Hans Kouwenberg

Establishing Peace

E.H. Johnson recipient makes hope known in the world

BY AMY MACLACHLAN

Dr. Ernie Regehr's passion for his peace-building work was shown with tears while accepting the E.H. Johnson award for being "on the cutting edge of mission." His emotions were evident when he recounted a conversation he had with a Sudanese refugee during the north-south civil war—a time when outside aid was so non-existent that the thousands of squatters had no food, not even tea. The young man asked Regehr why no one had stepped in to help. "The desolation haunts me in a more visceral and immediate way than do the scenes of the inhuman physical hardship and deprivation that are strong and present there. The reality of utter abandonment was something that E.H. Johnson knew very well—and he refused to tolerate it."

The lessons of "Ted" Johnson, a Presbyterian missionary to China known for his compassion for victims of violence and conflict, have imprinted themselves on Regehr's heart. The co-founder and senior policy advisor of Project Ploughshares, a Presbyterian-supported organization devoted to working for peace and justice, was appointed to the Order of Canada in 2003.

Regehr spoke about official indifference and abandonment, and "the crushing defeat of hope" that such stances create. He referred to the UN's Responsibility to Protect policy, created in 2005 as a means of violating state sovereignty in the name of protecting vulnerable people. The policy confirms that primary responsibility lies with the state, but when that fails, the international community has a responsibility to step in—with collective force "should peaceful means be inadequate"—in order to thwart genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing or crimes against humanity. "The R2P policy is an attempt to set conditions to preclude the indifference of the world to the deliberate use of the suffering of people as a war tactic."

Regehr applied this mindset to the current conflict in Afghanistan. What has been ignored, he said, are the lessons of peace-building—namely, "to focus on building conditions in which the local population can see evidence of positive change." That means building local security, providing humanitarian relief as well as education, health care, and communication, disarmament of combatants, and economic development.

He said Canada has a role to play in establishing such peace, and creating an environment that persuades Afghans "that their government has the interests of all Afghans at heart."

"To find hope in the midst of apparently justified despair requires action—the active pursuit of possibility, despite the odds," said Regehr, in closing. "Or, as Ted Johnson might have put it, serving humanity in concrete action is how the church makes the Gospel of hope known in the world." ■


Annemarie Klassen

be in touch with other faiths, to serve humanity and to serve God."

HAMID SLIMI, CANADIAN COUNCIL OF IMAMS

"The church in India is faced with a lot of challenges. Often we come across threats and opposition from the majority community in the country. But the church is growing, and we are a church for the oppressed community. We live among them, and share resources to develop and improve lives."

RT. REV. G. DEVAKADASHAM, BISHOP OF THE KANYA KUMARI DIOCESE, CHURCH OF SOUTH INDIA.■

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Get Yer YARs Out

There was a smile in her heart. BY ALLYSSA DE BRUIJN



Being a Young Adult Representative at this year's General Assembly is one of the most unexpectedly enjoyable things I have done in my life. In all honesty, I had no idea what to expect. I was being thrown into the inner workings of the church I had grown up in, and I did not know if I would come out the other side. I felt unprepared and inexperienced and I was starting to get uneasy about the whole affair. Fortunately for me, when I arrived at the beautiful campus at Waterloo, my uneasiness was quenched when the smiling face of John-Peter Smit, a YAR group leader along with his wife Tori, greeted me. He took me to a magical land where there were 15 other young people, all of whom were quite confused. That was the beginning of our adventure. We were told about the procedure of assembly and the general order of things, but there is a big difference between being told what will happen and experiencing something as it is happening.

The one thing I learned at assembly: there's power in numbers. This was undoubtedly proven at the opening worship service in Knox's Galt, Cambridge. I don't know exact numbers, but I'm sure there were more than 400 people there. Coming from Saskatchewan, I don't often get the opportunity to worship with so many Presbyterians. Less than two per cent of all Presbyterians in Canada live in Saskatchewan. Looking around the room and seeing our group in worship filled me with a sense of warmth and wholeness. God was there that day; you could tell from the smile in your heart.

Being a YAR surpassed my expectations of entertainment. Instead of the stiff, formal sederunts I was expecting, I was delighted to see that there was some freedom, and humour was not only appreciated, but sometimes necessary. Among all the ice-cream themed amendments, heated debates about stoles, comic strips starring the Moderator, and inspiring guest-speakers, we found that General Assembly could be a time of enjoyment and learning. Mingling with the commissioners was lots of fun, too. They were all so friendly and had so many stories to tell. The thing I liked most was the people. Presbyterians are, as a rule, the friendliest people I know, so imagine my delight to be living with hundreds of them for a week! There was never a dull moment, and I thank God for each and every person there.

All in all, the entire week was one I will hold fondly in my memories. I learned more about the Presbyterian Church and how it works than I could have ever imagined there was to know. General Assembly opened my eyes to what it means to be Presbyterian and I would not trade the experience for anything. Thank God for Presbyterians!

Allyssa de Bruijn's home church is St. Andrew's, Saskatoon. ■





India is Her Destiny

Pauline Brown chalks it up to God's grace. BY AMY MACLACHLAN

As a young girl, Pauline Brown dreamed of going to India. Years later, while a navy nurse, she met a man with gangrene who used to be a missionary in India. She told him of her dream to travel there, and his encouragement made the pull even stronger.

With no theological training and no mission experience, Brown applied to go to India's Bhil field. The Women's Missionary Society, having sought a nurse for four months, saw the 25-year-old Brown as answered prayer. Six months later, her bags were packed and she was on a boat. "It may be fanciful, but I basically walked off the gang plank and thought, 'I'm home,'" said Brown during an interview on a humid day in May. "I've always felt it was a place I was supposed to be."

At first glance, one can mistake Brown as Indian. Her long black hair, always pulled back in a braid or swept up in a bun, her traditional sari and her fluent Hindi, mixed in with a hard to place accent that seems part Indian and part French, easily cover her Ottawa and Huguenot provenance.

And though she would never admit it, Brown is the closest thing that the Presbyterian Church has to a celebrity. When she speaks, people fall silent. When she tells the moderator to sit down, (as she did at assembly) he obeys. And when someone mentions her name, all who have met her, talked with her, visited her, or hosted her in their home, respond with nodding heads, warm smiles and knowing glances that belie the unforgetable encounters they each have shared with her.

Her kindness and hospitality, her humility and authenticity, as well as her quick wit and humour have left many inspired, smitten and proud to be Presbyterian. "I am here by the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ," she said in her opening remarks to the assembly. "And I thank him for his graciousness all through these years."

Brown spent her 55 years in India working under the Church of North India in various capacities, but always with a focus on health care and education. Travelling around the rolling hills of the Bhil field with her mobile clinic, heading up community health programs that train locals in hygiene, first aid, nutrition and midwifery, teaching at schools of nursing, participating in the women's group at her church in Jobat, or simply welcoming people in her home, Brown put herself second as she strove to make life better for others. She received the Order of Canada in 2001.

She credits her WMS superiors for encouraging her to stay, saying though she knew nothing about being a missionary, they were always tolerant of her mistakes. "I'm sure those women realized how green I was," said Brown. "There was a lot of learning, a lot of love, and a lot of forgiveness. I must have done a lot to offend. Even my friends and family said I wouldn't last a year. And now, 55 and a half years later, God is still working."



She stressed that the PCC is the only church that has ministered to the Bhil field, starting with John Buchanan who travelled there in 1897. The relationship that has ensued, said Brown is strong and faithful, and of great importance to the Bhil people.

"Can Presbyterians believe in destiny?" she asked, a playful, yet resolute look in her eyes. "Because I believe that India is my destiny."

Though officially retired this summer, Brown will return to India to serve in an informal capacity. ■

Knox Presbyterian Church, Selkirk, Manitoba

Knox Church seeks to call a full-time Minister of Word and Sacrament. The people of Knox desire a Minister who is devoted to lively, meaningful, worship, who can provide compassionate pastoral care for all ages, and who is keen to train and enable the ministry of our congregation. In theology and worship style we would appreciate someone "traditional" but "flexible". We seek someone who is mature in their faith with an active prayer life. Knox is in particular need of stability and a settled pastoral presence at this point in our history. This is not a call for someone on the way to other things.

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We've Got to Stop Meeting Like This

Or do we? BY CALVIN BROWN



Assembly is a good time for meeting friends and sometimes saying goodbye to them. One friend from my intervarsity days is Annemarie Klassen, who is stepping down from her good work as Associate Secretary of Stewardship and Education in Mission; another is Pauline Brown, who is nearly a legend as a missionary, serving over 55 years in India and who has always encouraged me through my years at the Renewal Fellowship. Pauline, although retired, will return to India and continue to do the work she has been doing, now on a volunteer basis. The three or four standing ovations indicated the high respect, love, and deep honour the church holds for her. Another friend in the leaving mode is Jim Czegledi who worked as Associate Secretary of Evangelism and Worship for most of the last decade. Others and I have deeply appreciated his leadership in this field. Finally, my friend Hans Kouwenberg was elected Moderator of Assembly and we wish him every blessing in the year ahead as he emphasizes grass root ministry in congregations as the core ministry in the church's mission.

Overall the assembly was amiable. The most contentious issue came from the Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Committee who were asking for a new mandate with special reference to their work with other faiths. The words they chose, however, were ambiguous at best. The mandate they wanted was to encourage Presbyterians to acknowledge, understand and appreciate other faith traditions, and to help Presbyterians to live in good relationship with persons who belong to other religions. As a minority report stated, the problem was that the words as defined by the committee were not dictionary definitions. For example Oxford defines acknowledge as "agree to the truth of, own, recognize the authority or claims of." The committee's own definition was simply to "accept the existence of." There is a world of difference between the two.

In my view one puts the mandate in agreement with *Living Faith* and our other subordinate standards and the other is in conflict with them. It seems then that the statement with the words as redefined by the committee can be acceptable to our present standards. But the direction in which the committee chair said they wanted to lead the church in effect says all faiths are equal, would not. In the end the motion carried without ever having had the real substance debated. The long line-up at the microphones to register dissent demonstrated the deep frustration with both the process and the outcome.

Some people expressed concerns that the wording was too ambiguous,

awkward, and imprecise; others said they felt uncomfortable that there was no clear understanding in the proposed mandate, that there was only salvation through Jesus Christ; others felt concern that the mandate only directed us about how we spoke to ourselves and not how we addressed people of other faiths; others were concerned about the ominous warnings from the chair that if this wasn't passed all dialogue with others would have to cease. Two Young Adult Reps spoke but their advice was not heeded (alas!). One shared that dialogue with people of other faiths was a common occurrence for his generation and

In all that Assembly did, this issue regarding the uniqueness of Jesus as the only Saviour and Lord is the one that will not go away

that you could have dialogue without compromising your own faith; the second one suggested from what she heard we were not ready to come to consensus on this issue and that it should be referred back for more consideration and brought to a future assembly.

In all that assembly did, this issue regarding the uniqueness of Jesus as the only Saviour and Lord is the one that will not go away. It threatens to be even more divisive for us as the blessing of same sex unions and ordination of gay priests and bishops has been at the Anglican General Synod which met shortly afterwards.

This issue is the 'deal breaker' for the church. If we cannot keep this faith expressed in the creeds and doctrinal standards of the church then where do we go from there? Will there be a separation? If so will it be acrimonious or gracious? This is not the issue facing Canadian Presbyterians alone but it is one that wise Christians will begin to prayerfully consider as they seek to form a faithful response.

Some days I think we've got to stop meeting like this and other days I want us to meet and not avoid the hard questions facing us. Whatever happens it is my hope that every day we will pray that the glory of God will be manifest through us and through our church.

Calvin Brown is the executive director of the Renewal Fellowship within The Presbyterian Church in Canada. ■





Common Acts of

By sharing their land churches cultivate more than just food. BY LORRAINE JOHNSON

"One day we stuck a shovel in the ground, and we never looked back," says Pastor Mike Mills of Advent Lutheran, Toronto, telescoping the church's speedy decision-making process into an even speedier description. "The congregation held a vote on Sunday. By Wednesday, we were mapping out plots, and by the following Sunday we were digging." Nestled in an island of land—locally nicknamed the "peanut"—created by a split in Don Mills Road north of Sheppard Avenue in Toronto, the grounds of Advent in early spring look much like the grounds of the highrise apartments that dominate the neighbourhood. Yellow dandelion flowers poke up through the newly greening lawn; tiny blossoms on maple trees dangle from branches turning lush with leaves. But tucked among the traditional lawn landscape of this church are dozens of freshly dug garden plots. Some fan out in a circle, others line up in a neat soldier row. Some are lined with wooded dividers; others have narrow paths of grass between them. But come summer, all will be overflowing with vegetables, herbs, fruits and flowers.

"Right from the beginning, the idea was that it would be a garden for the community," explains Mills, "not just for members of the church." The church's Sunday school has two of the 104 plots, with the rest avidly cultivated by a diverse mix of people from the neighbourhood. With 26 different language and culture groups, immigrant and refugees from the world over make up the majority of the garden's plot holders, and the food they grow is equally diverse: Asian vegetables such as bok choy, Lebanese greens such as mulikhia, Jamaican hot peppers, and, appropriately enough, even peanuts (perhaps in tribute to the local name for the peanut-shaped island of land).

"This area is really lacking in places to buy food," Mills points out, and the garden is an important supplement to many of the low-income gardeners' food dollars. This explains the large waiting list—even though the number of plots has almost doubled from the original 60 in 2005, there are many more people who want space. "We dream of becoming a food centre for the neighbourhood," says Mills as he outlines his vision for an expanded program: a green roof on the building, a community kitchen, after school cooking classes for kids, a farmers' market .... "This is a place where the community can come together, a place where people can gather."

While the practical benefits to the local community are clear, benefits to the church community clearly animate Mills: "There has been a real shift for the church, a change in our fundamental self-understanding—this is everyone's land, not just our own. This isn't a theology that's separate—this is a theology that grows out of common acts of living together."

White-robed choir members lead the procession through the dark, incense-filled corridors of St. Thomas's Anglican in downtown Toronto. The congregation follows behind and, reaching the doorway opening from the church into the bright sunlight of the spring day, everyone squints from the light and basks in the warmth. It is Rogation Sunday, the day the church garden will be blessed.

The Rector of St. Thomas's, Rev. Mark Andrews, sprinkles holy water over the garden beds, playfully threatening to splash some on the congregants. The mood is both joyful and focussed as everyone recites Psalm 65: "Thou visitest the earth and waterest it: Thou makest it very plenteous ... and blessest the increase of it."

The tiny, hidden garden is in an unlikely spot. Tucked in a small patch near the Sexton's cottage, there's a parking lot beside it, a laneway along it, and University of Toronto building construction going on around it. But from this small spot—just 350 square feet of garden space—St. Thomas's has grown a surprising amount of fresh food—more than 900 servings of vegetables—for its Out of the Heat program.

Begun in 2006 by University of Toronto master's student (and St. Thomas's choir member) Suzanne Brooks, the garden consists of raised beds planted with lettuce, peas, beans, carrots, beets, tomatoes, cabbages and other vegetables and herbs. Volunteers from the congregation do all of the labour—from the building of the raised beds to the weekly weeding. "People embraced the ➤

PHOTOGRAPHY: BOB KENNEDY


Living



Stewards of Creation: Suzanne Brooks with Rob Kennedy and Marlene Fader tend the earth to share its blessings.

garden right away," says Andrews. "There was a natural connection with what the volunteers in the Out of the Heat program were already doing."

On Thursday nights and Friday mornings throughout the growing season, volunteers pick and wash vegetables, which are then distributed to the guests who take part in the church's Friday evening Out of the Heat program. Along with a meal, the approximately 80 people who visit each week are invited to take a bag of fresh produce away with them. "Many of the guests live on the streets and don't have access to preparation facilities, so it was a challenge to provide a mix of vegetables that people could eat right here or take away with them. I didn't think anyone would want the beets, but I was surprised, they were very popular. We never have anything left over," says Brooks.

Perhaps surprisingly, given the site's location, there has also been no vandalism. Still, the church doesn't take chances. The garden shed is kept locked, and it's probably the only combination lock in Toronto with a Biblical in-joke: the numbers to unlock it are taken from scripture, from a parable about gardening. The main challenge is predation by the ubiquitous urban creatures—squirrels and racoons. For this year, the garden's second, volunteers have constructed cages and placed nets over the raised beds for protection.

"I've found that people are eager to get involved," says Brooks of the more than 30 church volunteers involved in the garden. "When you start a project like this, you just can't believe the expertise that becomes available, the talents people might not normally have a chance to exercise or express in a church setting." She notes that one of the biggest benefits of the garden to the church, along with providing food for the Out of the Heat program, is that it provides an opportunity for fellowship, "a chance for congregation members to get to know each other in a different way."

The garden also encourages church members to think about the church environment in a different way and to make connections: "We've increased our composting program as a result of the garden," says Brooks, "and we're looking at installing rain barrels. The garden brings these issues forward as a natural progression." Brooks suggests that for the parish, the connections go beyond the social and environmental and into the spiritual. "A really important part of this is that we're all stewards of creation. We need to ask what we can do to promote sustainable living. As churches, we have an added responsibility."

By caring for creation, gardening and faith find fertile common ground, and the metaphor is rooted in earth. What is being nurtured through these acts of cultivation is more than food, it's spirit.

Lorraine Johnson is a freelance writer in Toronto, and author of Tending the Earth: A Gardening Manifesto. ■



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Instituting Rest

You have to create your own sabbath.

BY CATHY GALE



The author and her pooches during a moment made Sabbath with prayer.

I was supposed to be at a conference in April—Call Sabbath a Delight: Solace, Sanctuary and Space for the Soul—but, it was cancelled for insufficient registrations. In following up, the planning committee heard one thing consistently: "We're just too busy".

Too busy for Sabbath? It would seem many are, so many just like me. Some introductions: I'm an active elder, committee chair and general multi-tasker. Wife of 25 years, mother of two teenage sons. Household manager, CEO, Mom's Taxi, renovation coordinator. I live out my vocation, writing, whenever possible. Definitely middle aged, sometimes my energy flags and my attitude tanks. Thank you God, for grace! My point? Many Canadian families—the ones the church reaches out to—share the busyness of this stage of life. We work, run households, nurture family relationships, coordinate our offspring's schooling, activities, interests and social lives. Sometimes it's difficult to make it through the week, let alone fit in church attendance and intentional Sabbath times. Too busy for Sabbath? That's why we need it.

My church has generously provided opportunities to learn more about Sabbath. A weekend workshop explored Sabbath practices and taught of its spiritual gifts. The necessity of Sabbath has been preached and soon we'll host special worship celebrating Sabbath. With all that support, surely I've figured it out: why I need Sabbath, how and when it will happen and the benefits to my spiritual life. Sad to say, it ain't so!

My initial enthusiasm mellowed with the reality of incorporating it into home life. I pondered the ➤



A day for worship, for relaxing, finding delight in God's world and in each other, for the sole purpose of renewing our spirit, as God would have us do

possibility of a whole day of Sabbath. When no homework intrudes, no shopping, no laundry, no ironing. No meetings after church, no last minute trips to the mall because "we have this project due for school tomorrow." A day for worship, for relaxing, finding delight in God's world and in each other, for the sole purpose of renewing our spirit, as God would have us do. I considered, I shared, I asked, I dropped hints, I listened ... I let go.

Instead, I focused on my own practices. Small changes on Sundays: no meetings, intentionally festive meals, deliberate time in relationships and God's creation. I would make daily opportunities for my own Sabbath moments: walking my dogs, daily time outs to read, relax or just be.

Have I been marvelously successful? Not entirely. I still haven't found an alternative to post-church meetings but time for special meals, relationships and creation are more do-able. Weekday Sabbath times are susceptible to being pushed aside when other things apparently demand priority.

I was puzzled though. Although somewhat undisciplined, I was intentional in taking time to rest and relax: why wasn't I feeling more renewed? Unexpectedly I found the answer. Reviewing my workshop notes I spotted something I'd left out: preparation. Welcoming Sabbath time with distinct rituals, by word or deed, we acknowledge and invite God to be an active participant. We open ourselves to God's will in renewing us, in filling our spirit, in preparing us for what lies ahead, whatever it may be. In my self-centered take on Sabbath, I had forgotten to include a most important ingredient! No wonder refreshment seemed lacking if the Living Water wasn't invited.

Talking with a couple at our church who have been quite successful in their institution of Sabbath, I discovered they use a simple ritual to distinguish their secular and holy times; they find themselves to be continually renewed and refreshed. My motivation is restored and I'll keep trying, inviting God to lead me. So when I step out the door with the family pooches, will I establish that time as a Sabbath time with prayer and invite God to change me? I plan to! I wonder if the dogs will notice.

Cathy Gale, an elder at Varsity Acres Presbyterian Church in Calgary, eagerly anticipates the gifts of Sabbath renewal in her life. ■

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Called to Wonder



Summer is here! What do you and your family have planned for the summer holidays? Are you going on a vacation?

BY ERIN WALTON

God never takes a vacation. He is always near and He never takes a rest from loving us.

Give thanks to the God of gods. His love endures forever. *Psalm 136:2*

One of the best things about God never taking a holiday is that He is always able to hear our prayers. Even if we go away, He doesn't! Do you have some people you'd like to pray for this summer? Who are they and why?

This summer, I will pray for:

_____

and _____

Holidays are a good time to get outside and enjoy God's beautiful creation.



The highest heavens belong to the LORD, but the earth He has given to man. *Psalm 115:16*

Do you think we have done a good job of taking care of it for Him?

There are still lots of things on this earth that are beautiful and amazing and worth saving!

Try this activity whenever you are outside this summer:

Look What God Has Made!



Supplies needed:
- several Ziploc bags
- hole puncher
- ribbon or yarn
- construction paper or stiff paper

Collect nature items wherever you go (shells, pinecones, leaves, feathers, etc). Glue what you find onto a piece of construction paper, measured to fit inside the bag. Punch holes the same distance from the edges on each bag above the zipper. The bags make the pages of your book. Make a front and back cover using construction paper and punch holes in the same spots on the cover as the bags. On the front cover print "Look What God Has Made". This is the title of your book! Use ribbon or yarn to thread through the holes to bind the cover and the "pages" of your book together. Why not make a book for each of the people you've been praying for this summer?



Mission to Malawi

A congregational team is overwhelmed by its experiences. BY KATHLEEN GAULE

Last March, five members of St. Andrew's, Streetsville, Ont., realized a dream when they travelled to Blantyre, Malawi, to see first hand the operations of the Community Based Orphan Care Centres, which is a project of the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian. This was a big undertaking as the five paid their own travel and accommodation expenses. Each of them struggled with the decision to go: could the money be put to better use for the centres? The congregation has supported the project through Presbyterian World Service and Development for the past four years, raising in excess of $28,000; and was supportive of the five people to visit and report on what they'd seen.

The local Blantyre synod runs seven CBOCs serving over 800 children, from three to six years of age. Located in five townships they provide care from 7:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. A breakfast of porridge (which takes about three hours to cook over a wood fire) is served, followed by group activities and snacks later in the morning. After morning lessons they have lunch. While the CBOCs have some paid teachers, they rely mostly on community volunteers.

Each of them struggled with the decision to go: could the money be put to better use?

The first week, the team painted two of the centres, in Ndirande and Chilobwe. In the second week they visited the Chigodi Conference Centre which provides leadership training to empower women and upgrade their skills so that they can train other women in their local areas. They met two women who have embarked on income generating projects, one with a poultry operation and the second with goats.

They also visited five Community Based Care Centres, which get help with training teachers and some food from the synod. Home Based Care visits were also on the itinerary. Each community has a committee of volunteers identifying those in need, and counselling the sick and encouraging them to seek appropriate treatment as well as engage in productive ventures. The sick are referred to hospitals, and family members are taught how to care for them by providing proper nutrition.



Above: Children at one of the centres. Left: Children at the first Community Based Orphan Care Centre which the group visited and painted.

Mulanje Mission Hospital had a great impact on the mission team because it had a feeding program for orphans under two years old (the only one of its kind). The hospital also provides primary health care and programs dealing with environmental health, mother and child welfare and HIV/AIDS. The catchment area covers more then 66,000 people.

The team deeply appreciated the support received from their hosts, Joel and Rebecca Sherbino and left Malawi somewhat overwhelmed by what they had seen, but determined to continue to make a difference in the lives of the people of Malawi.

Kathleen Gaule is a member of St. Andrew's, Streetsville, Ont. She was one of the five to travel to Malawi. ■

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The iGod

New technologies provide a sort-of spirituality. BY DARYL CULP

May 17, 2060: White lines snake from my head to the little portable device slipped into my pocket. I'm wearing the new technological device that inputs electromagnetic impulses into my brain, stimulating my temporal lobe. As the waves build in intensity, I feel a calm come over me. It's a spiritual experience, without the bother of praying for hours. I sense a presence beside me.

Science fiction? Maybe, but technology is leading us towards a life in which even our spiritual needs are met by electronic devices. A larger version of this device has been built using a motorcycle helmet and the inventor claims it can simulate religious experience. Then there's the website called iGod, which uses an artificial intelligence program to mimic a personal conversation with God.

But we don't have to look into the future to see this phenomenon. Technologies are meeting our spiritual needs even now. Consider the iPod and MySpace.

The iPod is the spiritual symbol of our generation. It represents two of the defining beliefs today: choice and entertainment. One commentator has said that movements in Eastern Bloc countries to tear down the Iron Curtain meant people had the freedom to choose between Coke and Pepsi. That statement trivializes the struggles that brought down the Iron Curtain, but it does reflect the reality of our 'free' choices. The iPod also represents freedom of choice, but what choices do we make with that freedom?

Most music on most iPods is entertainment. It stimulates our senses but does not often get us to reflect on deeper elements of our existence. The modern music industry produces music that appeals to our sense of self (or what we desire to be). The "star-making machinery behind the popular song" (Joni Mitchell, Free Man in Paris) too often portrays a shallow image of self-absorption (although some artists actually call us to be more than what we currently are).

The iPod is an advance over top-40 radio because people can fill it with the best iTunes they can lay their hands on. But the iPod represents the ultimate in modern preoccupation with the self. Listening to music through headphones can yield a particularly entrancing mental state. The reflection encouraged by the isolation given by blocking out external distractions is similar to that given by meditation. I do think that iPods can enhance spiritual experience, but it is a deeply self-centered experience.

Of course, it depends on what you listen to, since different styles of music give particular experiences (the calm serenity of Arvo Pärt's music versus the throbbing sensuality of the Rolling Stones). What are people meditating on

when they listen to their iPod? They listen to music that they like, that feeds their own emotions. Although these are legitimate roles for music, they are not the most profound. Laurie Anderson, a U.S. experimental performance artist and musician, calls her work "difficult music." It does not aim simply to please or to make one feel good.

To be fair, some popular music (and more independent music) speaks to larger human concerns and does not offer saccharine solutions. Music can speak to the whole soul: its joys, sorrows, questions and certainties. But music can also be a communal experience. It is not enough to share one of your friend's earphones. Start writing your own songs and share them with others.

The Me Media

Personal technologies like MySpace (a popular social networking website) also involve spiritual elements. For one, they reflect a fundamental human hunger for connections with others. This is central to the Christian notion of the "image of God." Personal relationships are a vital part of the way in which we reflect God's own being.

Some commentators call these social networks the "Me Media" because they encourage a way of being that is all about enhancing self-esteem. The best photos of the person are displayed and people compete to see who has the most links to "friends." The shallowness of these relationships is evidenced in the briefness of the communication between people (if any—most MySpace use is probably anonymous browsing). The online profiles are enticing, but may be exaggerated or at least indicate only a portion of the personality, inevitably the most marketable aspect. Fortunately, the Internet also provides a forum for "blogs" (a sort of online diary) which are often more reflective.

Ursula Franklin provides a reality check for those entranced by websites and e-mail. A materials science and metallurgy professor at the University of Toronto, she grew concerned about the social effects of technology. In 1989, she delivered the prestigious Massey Lectures.

Franklin makes a distinction between two types of technology: prescriptive ones that mould us into their image, and holistic technologies that allow true humanity to flourish.

I do think that iPods can enhance spiritual experience, but it is a deeply self-centered experience

Franklin does a good job of defining how new information technologies distort human communication patterns. She emphasizes the give-and-take that happens in face-to-face meetings, as well as the body language and other non-verbal cues that help us interpret the message. These cannot be duplicated in e-mail, which breaks the time-bound exchanges and lacks emotional cues (emoticons notwithstanding :-)).

Telephones, she accepts, do give some emotional cues in tone of voice, and are synchronous—the conversation happens with no lapse between exchanges—so they allow give-and-take. But I wonder what she thinks about cell phones, which encourage intimate exchanges, unfortunately too often in public places. One of my students, for whom English was a second or third language, wrote an essay about "self-phones," which I think typifies the way this intimate technology is another example of the Me Media.

When does God break into our reality? Do we allow other people to be that still small voice that is left over when the allure of the latest technology is stripped away? Can we use our creations to foster the image of the personal God within us and others?

Daryl Culp is a theologian in Toronto. ■

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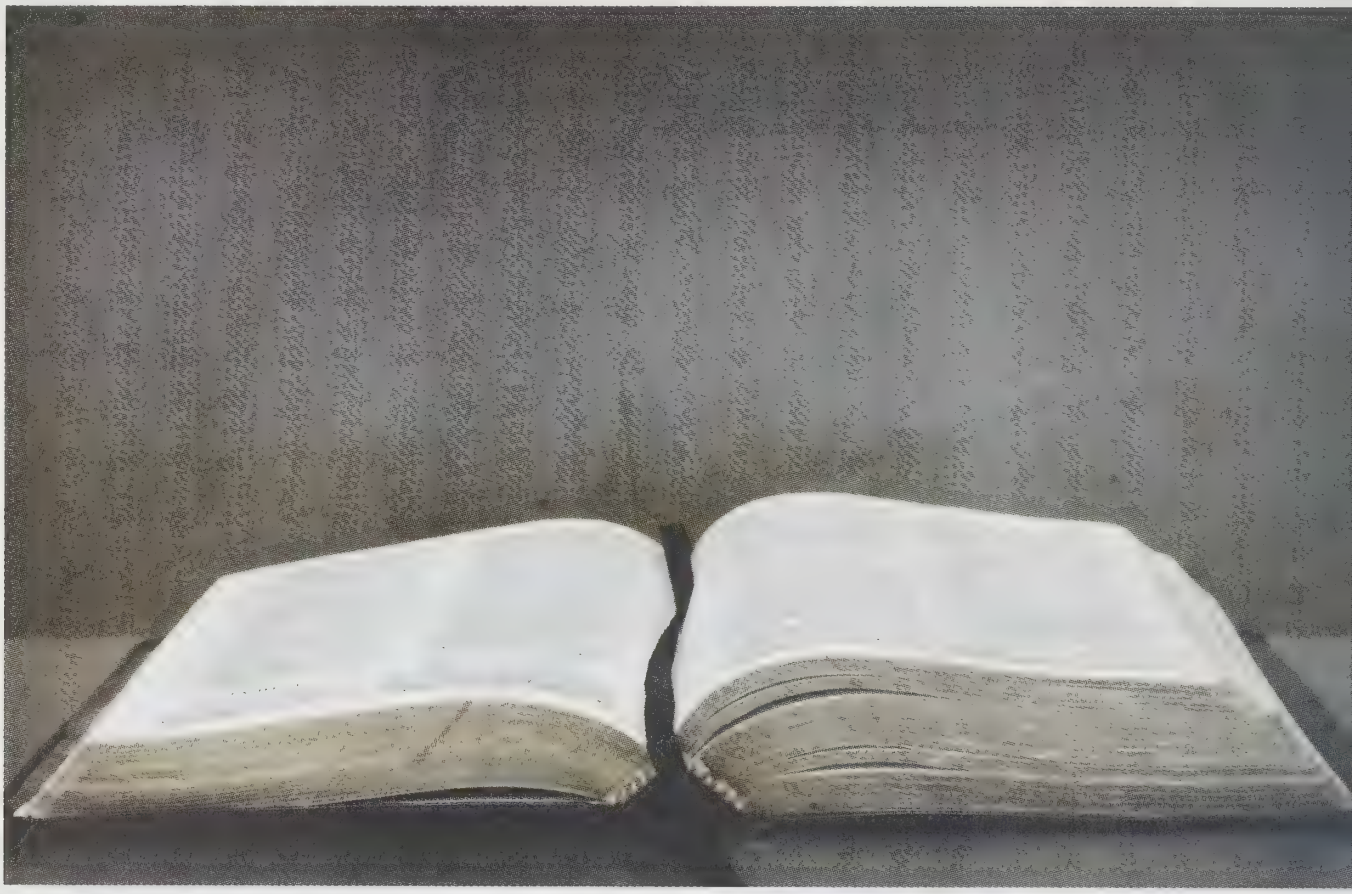
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Two Churches, One Heritage

A shrewd and committed analysis for a way forward. BY A. DONALD MACLEOD

Divided Heritage: The Presbyterian Contribution to the United Church of Canada
by John Webster Grant; *Gravelbooks*.



This is a marvellous book, a fitting final testament of a gracious and able historian, who had a deep understanding of Canada and a love for its religious heritage. John Webster Grant's death last December at the age of 87 has impoverished the church. He writes beautifully, with clarity and charity, and is a master of the telling quote and the defining detail. One could hope that it will be widely read, and become a standard text for those wanting to understand where we have come from and where we are headed both as a denomination and for our sister denomination with which we have had a complex relationship since 1925, as we share a common tradition and with whom we have acted and reacted, often in tandem.

One senses nostalgia on the part of Grant as he assesses where his own United Church of Canada has come from and an appreciation of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. His roots are in Pictou County, N.S., and his childhood, following his preacher father's death of tuberculosis when Grant was two years old, was spent in the town of Pictou. As a young ordained missionary to the East River charge (which included Grant's home congregation of Calvin Sunny Brae), I was quickly initiated, 38 years on, to the lore and the legend of church union. It was for him, as for so many of his generation, a defining event.

Grant speaks personally and passionately about his Presbyterian heritage, and then in six cogent and carefully scripted chapters delineates its origins, its Scriptures, its worship, its ministry, its polity and its outreach. Each is a remarkable summary of the DNA of Presbyterianism in Canada,

told with wit and wisdom and enlivened by personal anecdotes of a lifetime. Anyone wishing to understand our denominational ethos need look no further: it should be required reading for theological students. Grant's keen powers of observation capture the essence of the matter.

It is particularly in the final chapter—titled appropriately Nec Tamen Consumebatur—that he provides one of the clearest summaries of events leading up to church union I have read. It deals (as a United Church minister) fairly and charitably with the nonconcurrents, and concedes many of their arguments, which after 82 years have lost much of their sting. He acknowledges the considerable achievement of reconstituting the Presbyterian Church and even admits that the numbers were much more evenly divided than has been previously recognized.

He writes beautifully, with clarity and charity, and is a master of the telling quote and the defining detail

As an outsider, his observations about the so-called continuing church are telling. Referring to a conversation with Presbyterian minister Wilfrid Butcher, the two men agreed that the United Church was much more united, in spite of having brought together three strands of Protestantism, than the post-1925 Presbyterian church. He paints with a broad brush the tensions created by the various reasons people gave for staying out of union, and the wide theological gulf between D. J. Fraser of Presbyterian College and the students of J. Gresham Machen of Princeton who came to Canada to fill the void. The latter group he somewhat caricatures. It is misleading to state that Superintendent James Robertson went to Union Seminary, New York City, when he spent only his final year there, being shaped by his previous two at Princeton. Robertson was one of a long line of so-called "confessional Presbyterians" that enriched the church before and after union. Grant rightly attributes the theological renaissance of the denomination after union to Walter Bryden.

Grant is too wise an historian to predict the future. It is clear that he thinks a lot was lost: in the United Church a lack of Bible study and serious theological reflection, and among Presbyterians a self-imposed isolationism. The road ahead is unknown "but realistic Presbyterian analysis and bold United Church dreaming can do much to facilitate the journey." John Webster Grant's shrewd and committed analysis of our divided heritage hopefully provides light on the way forward.

A. Donald MacLeod's most recent book is C. Stacey Woods and the Evangelical Rediscovery of the University, *Inter-Varsity Press. He is research professor of church history at Tyndale Theological Seminary. www.adonaldmacleod.com* ■

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Do Dishes, Unite the Family



The kitchen really is the heart of the house. BY PHIL CALLAWAY

On my refrigerator are pictures of friends and family and animals and one of my dad falling off a chair laughing. There are magnets too. Imitation cabbages, cauliflowers, bittermelons, and pumpkins—all fitting the decor of the kitchen. The dieter's favourite Bible verse is there: "He must increase but I must decrease." Here are a few of my favorite fridge magnets:

- You'll eat it. You'll eat it and like it.
- Make yourself at home: Clean my kitchen.
- Coffee isn't helping, get the jumper cables.

I don't know about you, but I love the kitchen. It is the heart of the house, the pulse of a family. So much happens there. Botulism and putting out fires is only part of it. Few things bring a family together quite like opening the fridge together and playing "Guess What It Was." Could that thing that looks like a Chia Pet have once been a cucumber? The cheese weighs two pounds more than when you bought it, and it has hair! And that large thing, providing a sort of neon lighting, could it be the pot roast?

Then there's the stove. Nothing bonds a family quite like standing around a roaring grease fire on a cold winter's day.

And finally there's the table, the centerpiece of family discussions, announcements, debates, arguments, overeating, and even napping.

Whether it's breakfast, lunch, brunch, dinner, or a Thanksgiving or Christmas feast, being together in the kitchen is about as good as it gets. Few things can silence teenagers more quickly than food. And few things can bring a family together faster than a feast.

Nothing bonds a family quite like standing around a roaring grease fire on a cold winter's day

A friend of mine has a sign on her fridge: "Home is Where The Heartburn Is." Sadly heartburn is commonplace in families today. We run to appointments, stressed-out, grabbing half-made sandwiches or half-baked muffins with scarcely a nod left over for each other. In the midst of busy times, here are three items to place back on your menu, three suggestions to help you de-stress your life and bring back the joy.

Linger longer. One of the best ways to keep your children at home is to let the air out of their tires and sew the tops of their socks together. Another way is to fill their mouths with dessert. Families that eat dessert together stick together. So carve out time to enjoy chocolate, and put on the coffee pot too. Drink enough coffee and you can visit all night.

Ignore the dishwasher. Few inventions (besides the remote control) have pleased me more than the dishwasher, but recently in the Callaway house, something strange began to happen. Our water got weird. The glasses came out murky, caked in sludge. We called the experts who told us it was something to do with the water treatment plant and ➤

PHOTOGRAPHY: LARA FISHBEIN

Praying for those less fortunate helps us remember how much we have to be grateful for

possibly Global Warming and they were working on both. In the meantime we began washing dishes by hand. We introduced our children to something called dishcloths and dishtowels and a strange thing began to happen. We began talking while doing dishes. Actually communicating. Do you remember what that used to be like? I taught my daughter the fine art of snapping towels on her brother's hindquarters. I taught her how to run real fast down the hall and lock the bathroom door behind her. We hadn't heard this much laughing and screaming since the time my son tried to vacuum the neighbour's cat.

Pray together. There are five more items on my fridge, more precious than any fridge magnets. They are photos of our adopted children, the children we sponsor through an international organization. Their names are Carlos, Joel, Dariani, Habtamua, and Ndagirijwe (don't worry, I can't say it either). Whenever we remember, we pray for them before meals. Each of these five lives in a country where food is scarce. Praying for those who are less fortunate helps us remember how much we have to be grateful for and it's a sure-fire cure for complaints about the leftover Chia Pet salad.

Phil Callaway is the author of It's Always Darkest Before the Fridge Door Opens *(Bethany House). Visit him online at www.laughagain.org* ■

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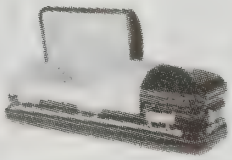
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Life Imitates Fly Fishing

We live each day with the promise of God's love and commitment. BY DAVID WEBBER

I stumbled over a friend at a local trout fishing hole the other day. We share shopping privileges at a local Cariboo-Chilcotin cow town and normally only get to visit at funerals and on town day. It was a treat to chat without the usual pressures. Noticing my relaxed demeanor, Randy immediately tried to steal one of my fishing secrets. Because of it, he almost came to a delightful end.

After skulking away from our seeming innocent chat with my secret hooked firmly in his ball cap, Randy dogtrotted for his fishing boat. He fished nonstop for the next two days with my secret fly and only caught a couple of suckers. Since the lake was teeming with lively and large rainbow trout, this would have been a delightful ending in itself, until God, who I am convinced is not only sovereign but also a fly-fisher, decided to make things more interesting and delightful.

Randy was beached at his campsite resting up from a hard day of sucker fishing, when a mutual friend trolled by and reported a trout feeding frenzy just to the north. Randy threw himself and three fishing rods of varying denominations into his 12-foot boat and made like the ringtails for the reported feeding frenzy. After a couple of hours of serious fishing without even a sucker to show for it, Randy proceeded back to the campsite with my secret fly innocently trailing behind him. At the time when his boat was perfectly in view of all the other campers, suddenly the line screamed off of Randy's reel and his fly rod bent in half. At the other end of the line a marvelous thee-pound rainbow trout leapt five feet out of the water.

Randy was in the midst of a fishing-induced coma and suddenly regained consciousness. He gasped for breath and grabbed for fishing rods. Not sure which rod he should deal with first, it took him a few moments to go through the process of untangling the other two in the bottom of the boat in order to figure it out. When he finally settled on the fly-rod with the rampaging rainbow attached, there was a real mess happening in the bottom of the boat, to which Randy decided to add by hand stripping his fly-line into the bottom of the boat instead of

reeling decently and in good order (Randy is not a Presbyterian). Some how he got the large trout up to the boat, saw the size of the thing and almost choked. At precisely the same moment the trout saw Randy, saw the size of the thing, gasped and headed for the bottom of the lake. Randy

Your life, my life, the life of faith, is a never-ending story. Humanly, we think in finite terms, in terms of endings

became as busy as a one armed paper-hanger trying to facilitate the trout's run for the bottom of the lake from the tangled line of three fishing rods in the bottom of the boat.

That's when a spectator, a rather huge loon, decided it would be fun to get involved in the game. He started to chase the fish, diving and loon-cussing for all he was worth. Now the fish really got excited. So did Randy. He was now combating fish and fowl, hollering and waving his hat at the loon at the same time as he was desperately tangling and untangling his fishing line in the bottom of the boat to facilitate the trout's run. Things were getting loud, frantic and real interesting when Randy remembered a cardinal rule of fly-fishing; one should always get one's landing net ready long before one's fish arrives at the boat. With what must have been a fourth arm, Randy grabbed behind him for the landing net and gave it a tug. It wouldn't come off the bottom of the boat. It was tangled in some darned thing, so Randy gave it a tremendous yank. It came loose and Randy gasped as he saw the plug from the bottom of the boat dangling from the net and felt the icy water streaming in around his feet. And then the plug dropped off of the net into the lake and sank.

I have no idea exactly how this story ends. Randy refused to give further details, except to say that he eventually landed the fish, which weighed three-and-a-half pounds and the next day he was going fishing again to catch its bigger cousin. He said there must be a faith lesson in the story somewhere.

As I said, I have no idea exactly how the story ends. And I think that's the faith lesson in it. Fly-fishing doesn't end. With regards to endings, the Christian life imitates fly-fishing. They are both great big stories that don't end, and thereby hangs the blessing.

In the Bible, the life of Abraham is a case in point. As the story begins Abraham and Sarah are called by God and given a divine promise, which included receiving a great land and having many kids. And so Abraham and Sarah, who are old and childless, set off to find land in Canaan. They arrive in the midst of a famine and have to escape to Egypt. The story should have ended sadly at this point. There is no land, or offspring. Except, God is not finished yet.

And so the story continues. After a run in with Pharaoh in Egypt, Abraham and Sarah return to the promised land of Canaan. Abraham begins squatting and farming. God promises again, much land and ➤

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many kids. It is the "happily ever after" ending that Abraham dreams about.

The story continues and at one point Abraham says to God: "Uh ... I have not seen any land or kids yet." Even after God makes two formal covenant promises the story still looks like it is ending badly. Except, God is not finished yet.

Abraham gets impatient. He fathers a son by Sarah's Egyptian maid, Hagar. Ishmael is born, Abraham's idea of the ending of the story. Abraham says to God: "Here ... take him ... let's end this thing." Perhaps the story should have ended there. Except, God is not finished yet.

And so it goes, chapter after chapter of divine promise and God not being finished yet. But as the story goes, it begins to become clear that Abraham is learning to live differently. Instead of living his life in search of an ending, preferably a happily-ever-after ending, Abraham is living his life enjoying the fact that God is not finished yet; wondering how God is going to work in his life in the next page of the story. And this is what the Bible, especially the book of Hebrews, calls a life of faith (see Hebrews 11).

What is God going to do in the next step of the journey—the next page of the story?

Your life, my life, the life of faith, is a never-ending story. Humanly, we think in finite terms, in terms of endings. This is especially so when life is hard or when life is difficult. But God is infinite and God does not deal in the finite or in endings. "God is not finished yet" is the basis of our lives of faith. Whatever you or I are going through just now, it is just one more step in the never-ending story. God is not finished yet. What is God going to do in the next step of the journey—the next page of the story? The life of faith is one of hope that is grounded in the certainty that God is not finished working in your life ... working with your personhood, working with your health, working with your relationships, working with your work, working with your family. Like Abraham and Sarah, we live lives full of promise, promise steeped in God's love and God's commitment. Each day we rise to the next part of the story of God and His love working in every aspect of the next page of our lives. And filled with hope we launch our boat.

Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the Record. *He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C. house church ministry. His most recent book is* Like a Winter's Aspen: Embracing the Creator's Fire. ■

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All notices of pulpit vacancies will be charged to the congregation: $40 minimum for one-time insertion or $25 per insertion for four or more. This charge applies to all congregations. Contact the Record office regarding items for this column.

Ministry Opportunities and Interim Moderators

Synod of the Atlantic Provinces

Bass River, N.B., Bass River Pastoral Charge; Rev. Kent Burdett, 101 Dutch Point Rd., Hampton, N.B. E5N 5Z2; 506-832-4985; kburdett@nbnet.nb.ca.

Halifax, N.S.; Knox Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. D. Laurence Mawhinney, PO Box 1972, Lunenburg, NS B0J 2C0; 902-634-4410 (office); 902-634-9212 (home); dlmawhinney@eastlink.ca.

Sunny Corner Pastoral Charge, N.B., St. Stephen's, Sunny Corner, St. Paul's, Warwick; Rev. H. Martyn Van Essen, 7 Hierlihy Rd., Tabusintac, NB E9H 1Y5; 506-779-1812; hmvanessen@hotmail.com.

Synod of Quebec and Eastern Ontario

Aylmer, Ont., St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church; Rev. Greg Davidson, c/o St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 82 Kent St., Ottawa, ON K1P 5N9; 613-232-9042; gd@standrewsottawa.ca.

Gloucester (Ottawa), Ont., Gloucester Presbyterian Church; Half-time minister; Interim Moderator Dr. Daniel MacKinnon, 1220 Old Tenth Line Rd., Orleans, ON K1E 3W7; 613-824-9260; pastordan@graceorleans.ca.

Lachute, Que., Margaret Rodger Memorial Presbyterian Church; Rev. Dr. Bill Klempa, 155 Lake Louisa Rd. N., Wentworth, QC J8H 0C5; 450-533-5321; wklemp@po-box.mcgill.ca.

Morrisburg, Ont., Knox; Dunbar, Ont., Dunbar; Rev. P. E. M. Chambers, PO Box 1513, Kemptville, ON K0G 1J0; 613-258-6654; perlcham@sympatico.ca.

Pincourt, Que., Ile Perrot; Mark Farrell, Convener, Search Committee, 242 Fifth Ave., Pincourt, QC J7V 5L3; 514-453-4796; markim@ca.inter.net.

Richmond, Ont., St. Andrew's; a call to dynamic, innovative, caring, family-focused ministry; Rev. Dr. Tom Gemmell, 38 Mary Hill Cres., Richmond, ON K0A 2Z0; 613-838-5949; tomgemmell@sympatico.ca.

Synod of Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda

Englehart, St. Paul's; Tomstown, Ont., Tomstown; St. Paul's and Tomstown Pastoral Charge approximately 10 km from Tomstown; full-time minister, Interim Moderator Rev. Janice Hamalainen, PO Box 908, New Liskeard, ON P0J 1P0; 705-647-8401; jhamalainen@parolink.net.

Fenelon Falls, Ont., St. Andrew's and Glenarm, Ont., Knox; Full-time minister; Interim Moderator, Rev. D. Griffiths, 45 Bond St., Lindsay, ON K9V 3P9; 705-324-5992; db.griffiths@hotmail.com.

Harriston, Ont., Knox-Calvin; Rev. Kees Vandermey, 55 Church St., PO Box 638, Elora, ON N0B 1S0; 519-846-2420; vanknox@sentex.net.

Madoc, Ont., St. Peter's Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator , c/o St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 110 Mill St., PO Box 118, Stirling, ON K0K 3E0; 613-395-5006; katherinejonah@hotmail.com.

Mississauga, Ont., Dixie Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Reid Chudley, PO Box 16, Hillsburgh, ON N0B 1Z0; 519-855-6216; r.chudley@bellnet.ca.

Mississauga, Ont., St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Peter Barrow, 24 Stavebank Rd. N., Mississauga, ON L5G 2T5; 905-278-8907; standrewspc@bellnet.ca.

Kitchener, St. Andrew's; Full-Time Minister of Pastoral Care; Interim Moderator Rev. Don McCallum, 55 Devere Dr., Guelph, ON N1G 2T3; 519-866-9400; Don@kortrightchurch.org.

Richmond Hill, Ont., Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Daniel Scott, 39 Saint Ave., Bradford, ON L3Z 3E6; 905-775-7274; ddscott@rogers.com.

Sault Ste Marie, Ont., Westminster Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Deon Slabbert, 38 Country Club Place, Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6A 5Z9; 705-945-7885; revdeons@shaw.ca.

Toronto, Guildwood Community; Rev. J. P. Ian Morrison, 17 Earswick Dr., Scarborough, ON M1E 1C7; 416-265-0135; Ian.morrison@sympatico.ca.

West Toronto Presbytery, Celebration; Interim Moderator Dr. Larry Brice, c/o Pine Ridge Presbyterian Church, 39 Knox Ave., Toronto, ON M9L 2M2; 519-586-7711; lbrice@sympatico.ca.

West Toronto Presbytery, York Memorial; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Lance Odland, 11 Cross St., Toronto, ON M9N 2B8; 416-241-9533; lance@westonpresbyterianchurch.com.

Synod of Southwestern Ontario

Ancaster, St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Rev. Anne Yee-Hibbs, c/o Erskine Presbyterian Church, 19 Pearl St. N., Hamilton, ON L8R 2Y6; synodaec@on.aibn.com.

Burlington, Knox; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Philip Wilson, c/o Trinity Presbyterian Church, 720 Ninth Ave., Hamilton, ON L8T 2A3; 905-385-5984; revpmw@auracom.com.

Flamborough, West Flamboro Presbyterian Church; Rev. James Douglas, 17 Dixon Dr., Port Dover, ON N0A 1N4; 519-583-3220; jdouglas1@sympatico.ca.

Fonthill, Kirk-on-the-Hill; Rev. Dr. Jack Neil, c/o First Presbyterian Church, 176 Elm St., Port Colborne, ON L3K 4N6; 905-834-4288.

Forest, St. James; Interim Moderator Rev. Daniel Roushorne, c/o St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, PO Box 1381, Corunna, ON N0N 1G0; 519-862-3641; sapcorunna@xcelco.on.ca.

Hamilton, MacNab St.; Rev. George Robertson, 80 Mill St. N., PO Box 221, Waterdown, ON L0R 2H0; 905-689-8115; rev.george@bellnet.ca.

Hamilton, New Westminster; Rev. R. Docherty, c/o St. John's Presbyterian Church, 10 Mountain St., Grimsby, ON L3M 3J6; 905-945-5352.

Hamilton, St. Columba; Dr. Clyde Ervine, 165 Charlton Ave. W., Hamilton, ON L8P 2C8; 905-522-9098; cervine.central@on.aibn.com.

Kirkwall Presbyterian Church; Full-time minister; Interim Moderator, Rev. Bob Dawson, 2138 Brant St., Burlington, ON L7P 3W5; 905-335-2640; minister@branthills.ca.

London, St. Lawrence; Half-time; Interim Moderator Rev. Lynn Nichol, 783 Victoria St., London, ON N5Y 4C9; 519-434-2476; briarhill33@yahoo.ca.

Mitchell, Knox Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Catherine Calkin, 3403 Perth Rd. 130, R. R. 2, St. Pauls, ON N0K 1V0; 519-393-6395; calkin@quadro.net.

Molesworth, St. Andrew's; Part-time position; John Zondag, 220 Livingstone Ave. N., Listowel, ON N4W 1P9; 519-291-4690; jzondag@wightman.ca

Sarnia, St. Giles; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Christine O'Reilly, 7745 Alfred St., Port Franks, ON N0M 2L0; 519-243-3862; corly@execulink.com.

Simcoe, St. Paul's; Rev. Dr. Stan Cox, Interim Moderator c/o St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, 85 Lot St., Simcoe, ON N3Y 1S4; 519-426-1845; sppc@kwic.com; www.stpaulssimcoe.com.

Stoney Creek, Heritage Green; Half-time position; Interim Moderator Rev. Bob Geddes, c/o The South Gate Presbyterian Church, 120 Claredon Ave., Hamilton, ON L9A 3A5; 905-385-7444; bobgeddes@mountaincable.net.

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Woodstock, Knox; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Lonnie Atkinson, c/o St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, 56 Thames St. S., Ingersoll, ON N5C 2S9; 519-485-3390; stpauls@execulink.com.

Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church

Witnessing & Promoting the Good News of Jesus Christ



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If you are interested in this Ministry opportunity please submit your profile by October 31, 2007. For more information and congregation profile please contact:

Rev. Dr. Daniel Scott, *Interim Moderator*
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Synod of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario

Selkirk, Man., Knox Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Robert Murray, PO Box 222, Pinawa, MB R0E 1L0; 204-753-8439; pcf@granite.mb.ca.

Winnipeg, Man., St. James; Rev. Amy Campbell, 299 Olive St., Winnipeg, MB R3J 2X5; 204-831-5561; amethyst@mts.net.

Winnipeg, Man., Westwood; Rev. Matthew Brough, Knox, 341 Eveline St., Selkirk, MB R1A 1M9; mcbroug@shaw.ca or Rev. Kevin Macdonald, St. John's, 251 Bannerman Ave., Winnipeg, MB R2W 0T8; mactamal@yahoo.co.uk.

Synod of Saskatchewan

Regina, Norman Kennedy; Rev. Eric Muirhead, 2170 Albert St., Regina, SK S4P 2T9; revfirstpres@sasktel.net.

Saskatoon, Circle West; Parkview; Rev. Amanda Currie, 436 Spadina Cres. E, Saskatoon, SK S7K 3G6; 306-242-0525; standrews@sasktel.net.

Weyburn, Knox; Interim Moderator Rev. Tae-Wook (Jonathan) Kwon; PO Box 7, Grenfell, SK S0G 2B0; 306-697-2612; joyktw@hotmail.com.

Synod of Alberta and the Northwest

Edmonton, Alta., Dayspring Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Harry Currie, 10025 105 St. NW, Edmonton, AB T5J 1C8; 780-422-2937; hcurrie@incentre.net

Edmonton, Alta., Strathcona Presbyterian Church; www.spchurch.ca; Interim Moderator Rev. Annabelle Wallace, 423-14259 50th St. NW, Edmonton, AB T5A 5J2; 780-633-0170; annabellew@shaw.ca.

Fort McMurray, Alta., Faith Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Lloyd

Fourney, 18512 92nd Ave., Edmonton, AB T5T 1P4; 780-481-1614; fourney@hotmail.com.

Medicine Hat, Alta., St. John's Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Diane V. Beach, 212 Perry Cres. NE, Medicine Hat, AB T1C 1X3; home 403-526-3512, office 403-526-4542; dianebeach@shaw.ca.

Synod of British Columbia

Armstrong, St. Andrew's; Rev. Doug Swanson, 1981 9th Ave. NE, Salmon Arm, BC V1E 1M1; 250-832-7282; standrews@jetstream.net.

Nanaimo, St. Andrew's; Dr. John F. Allan, 4235 Departure Bay Rd., Nanaimo, BC V9T 1C9; jfallan@shaw.ca.

Slocan Valley, St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Rev. Gavin Robertson, c/o First Presbyterian Church, 1139 Pine Ave., Trail, BC V1R 4R2; 250-364-0335; firstpc@telus.net.

Sooke, Knox Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Kerry McIntyre, 531 Herbert St., Duncan, BC V9L 1T2; kmcintyre@standrewsduncan.org.

Vancouver, Chinese Presbyterian Church, Associate Minister (English Ministry); Interim Moderator, Rev. Diane Tait-Katerberg, c/o Chinese Presbyterian Church, 6137 Cambie St., Vancouver, BC V5Z 3B2; katerberg@dccnet.com.

Victoria, Chinese (bi-lingual, English/Cantonese); Rev. H. McNabb, 760 Latoria Rd., Victoria, BC V9C 3A4; hamcnabb@shaw.ca

OBITUARIES

BRITTON, Barbara, aged 86 and a member of First Presbyterian Church, Chatham, Ont.

BURNHAM, Lena, aged 92 and a long time member of First Presbyterian Church, Chatham, Ont.

DOHERTY, Lolita, passed away on March 29, 2007 at the age of 75, an elder at Trinity Presbyterian Church, Campbell River, B.C. She was the mother of six children, and was a grandmother and great-grandmother. She was active serving her community and church in many ways with a faith that shone through all she did.

HUNTER, W. Campbell, dedicated elder for 55 years, former clerk of session for 33 years at Lakeview Presbyterian Church, Thunder Bay, Ont., died on February 6, 2007 at the age of 90. Campbell was respected by all who knew him and while a quiet man, when he spoke it was with eloquence and wisdom and never a harsh word or complaint. His service was an example of what eldership in the church should be. Even after a heart attack and broken hip he would consistently attend Sunday service, special events and meetings, many times in weather that would keep other people safely at home. He is dearly missed by his church family.

JOHNSTONE, Viola Marion, of Greenwood, Pictou County, N.S., died on Sunday, February 11, 2007 following a brief illness. Born in Springhill, Cumberland County N.S., Viola was the daughter of the late Gilmore and Margaret Bell (MacDonald) Johnstone. She received her education at the Greenwood Elementary School and New Glasgow High School and graduated from Acadia University in 1945 with a Bachelor of Science Degree and a Manual Training License for Domestic Science. Viola taught throughout the Pictou County School District, including more than 20 years in the town of Trenton, N.S. She was a staunch and dedicated member of Union Presbyterian Church, Thorburn, N.S., having been active in the Esther Mission Circle AMS and the regular bible study group. Viola was ordained an elder in 1974 and served in that capacity until her death. She was instrumental in starting the Thorburn Seniors Friendship Group and served on the Thorburn Improvement Association. Viola was an accomplished poet having published several collections and had also written plays for several local groups to perform. She is survived by several relatives locally, a cousin Jean Brown of Manotick, Ont. and dearly remembered by her neighbours and friends in the Vale.

MCCUBBIN, Win, aged 91 and a member of First Presbyterian Church, Chatham, Ont.

MCNICHOL, William Arthur, long time member of Westminster Presbyterian Church, Estevan, Sask., passed away on March 16, 2007 at the age of 86. Bill served the church as elder, clerk of session, treasurer and trustee. His quiet humour will be missed by all who knew him.

PENNY, Rev. Brian P., passed away on March 13, 2007 at the age of 67 after a 13-year struggle with prostate cancer. In his immediate family he leaves behind Nancy, his wife of 40 years; three sons and their wives; and five grandchildren.

Brian's academic preparation for ministry included studies at Briercrest Bible Institute, Sask., Bethel College in Minnesota and Knox College, Toronto. His ministry was diversified. He served Presbyterian congregations at Rossburn and Wasywayseecappo Reserve, Man. and at Dawson Creek, B.C. Then he studied chaplaincy for three years at the North Dakota State Hospital. Following this he spent five years as Protestant Chaplain at the Saskatchewan Penitentiary in Prince Albert, Sask. During that time he conducted worship services for the small Presbyterian congregation at the nearby village of Shipman. Next he spent two years studying to complete a Masters degree at Briercrest Biblical Seminary.

Brian arrived in Edmonton, Alta., in 1997 to commence a seven year ministry with international students at the University of Alberta under the auspices of Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship and included with that ministry he also served part-time for four years as the Presbyterian chaplain on the campus. Deteriorating health necessitated withdrawing from active ministry in 2004 although he still had study groups with students and adults in his home.

Brian was a "peoples' pastor." He was evangelical but not obnoxious. He will be remembered as a humble, very committed, dedicated, devout Christian who was concerned for people regardless of age, position in life and racial background. He spent himself for them. ■

Liberating Acts of Salvation

Christ is the connection that binds us.

BY REV. DR. J. H. HANS KOUWENBERG



We live in a world of disconnections and, often, these disconnections threaten to undo our sense of community as human beings and as Christians. There are increasing disconnections between the people among whom we live or work or worship or play. These are often different people, different circles of acquaintance.

We are disconnected by many things we do not hold in common. There are disconnections between regions of the country, between generations, between older and younger people, between traditional and contemporary visions and values and styles. There are disconnections between varying experiences and understandings, differing opinions, ideologies and theologies. There are also disconnections of faith expression between Christian denominations, within them, and even within congregations.

And then there are the "wildernesses" of our own personal disconnections, personal dislocations, personal discomforts and personal distresses.

In the midst of all this disconnection, I find the apostle Paul encouraging Christians with a sense of the connectedness of Christian faith and life. Amidst the multiplicity of disconnection faced by the Corinthian Christians, Paul reaches back across the centuries of history of his own people to find a sense and a series of connections.

> I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters that our ancestors were all under the cloud, all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ. Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them, and they were struck down in the wilderness.
>
> God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.
>
> Therefore my dear friends, flee from idols. I speak to you as sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.—1 Corinthians 10:1-17 (excerpted)

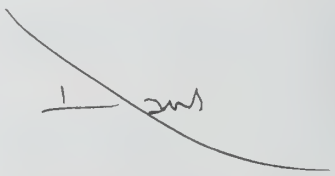
Paul sees how the disconnected sections of the church are all connected in Christ.

"Our ancestors were all under the cloud"—we have all experienced the mystery of what we believe to be God's guidance; "and all [have] passed through the sea"—we have all experienced a deep sense of God's liberating acts of salvation in the midst of particular and, perhaps, uniquely threatening circumstances; "and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and the sea" —we have all been baptized into the family of God; "and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink" —we have all tasted of the communion meal and experienced intimacy with God and with other people which can bridge the disconnections.

I'm glad that I belong to a connectional church, a church that is committed to working on the connections ... between the former, "old" covenant and the new, between differing theologies and understandings, between different parts of the country and constituencies. I'm glad that our church is small enough to get to know each other, and large enough for a rich variety of gifts and views.

Whenever we come to God in Christ, whenever we come to church, whenever we come together in a Bible study—whenever we come together for a "holy conversation" and allow God's Holy Spirit to work within, through and among us—whenever we come to Presbytery or to Assembly, we can reconnect, and we can make some new connections in our all-too disconnected world.

May it be so for you and me. ■



Hans Kouwenberg

Moderator's Itinerary

August 1-15 Malawi and Kenya



Rev. Stephen Kendall, Principal Clerk, accentuates the positive at General Assembly.

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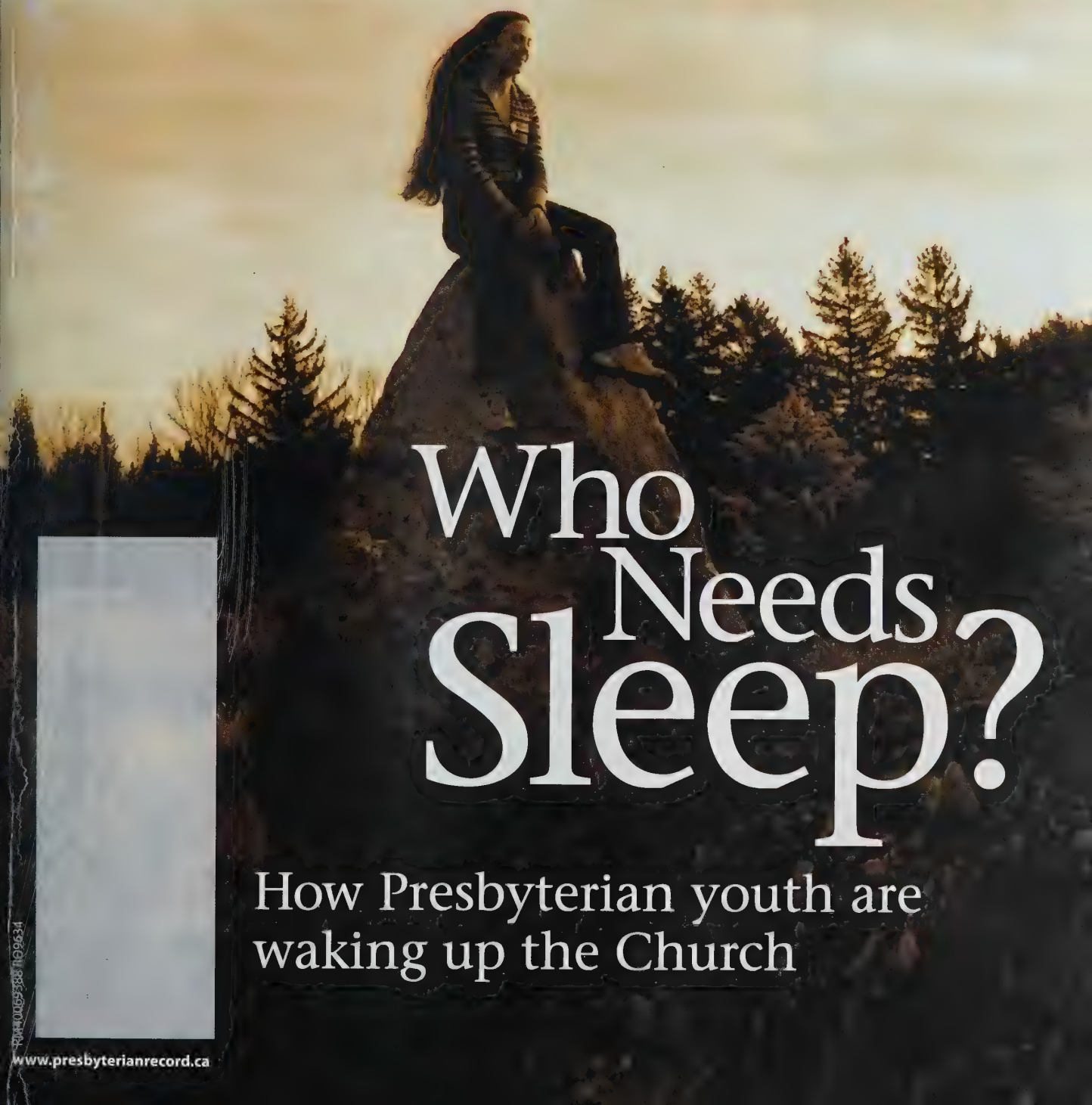
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PRESBYTERIAN Record

September 2007



Who Needs Sleep?

How Presbyterian youth are waking up the Church

www.presbyterianrecord.ca

2007 Christmas Cover Art Contest

The Record's second annual Christmas Art Contest is open to all those young or young at heart and to all Sunday schools.

Send your Christmas-themed art on an 8 1/2" x 11" sheet to:
Christmas Art Contest,
The Presbyterian Record
50 Wynford Drive
Toronto, ON M3C 1J7
or email your high res file to:
record@presbyterianrecord.ca

Deadline: September 30



Christmas Carol Contest

The winning recordings will be featured during the month of December on our website's "hit parade" for all readers to enjoy!

For more details visit www.presbyterianrecord.ca

The *Presbyterian Record*'s Christmas Carol Contest is open to all those young or young at heart and to all Sunday schools.

Deadline: November 15

PWS&D Poetry Contest



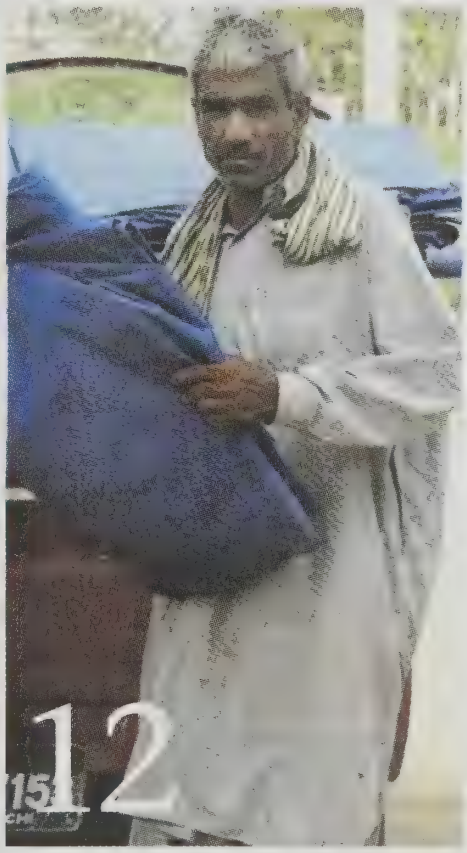
To celebrate our anniversary, we approached the *Record* and proposed a poetry contest to highlight the work of PWS&D. Members of St. Andrew's, Guelph, will adjudicate the submissions and the congregation will make a donation in the name of the winning entrant to PWS&D; the *Record* will publish selected submissions. All you have to do is write a poem (no epics, please; but open to all other styles). We particularly encourage youth and young-at-hearts to participate.

The poem should raise awareness for the work of PWS&D, express respect, love and compassion to those who suffer but stay away from showing pity. Respect is always a noble characteristic.

The deadline is October 31, 2007. Please send your poems to contests@presbyterianrecord.ca.







On the Cover: Erin Woods enjoys the landscape at Crieff Hills Community Centre. photography by Alex Luyckx

PHOTOGRAPHY: TOP, ALEX LUYCKX; LEFT, © ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/CPRENTICE; RIGHT, COURTESY OF CHURCH WORLD SERVICE

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WAKE UP, CHURCH!

The youth are here. But will they stay?

BY DAVID HARRIS



Reading an issue of the *Presbyterian Record* such as this one leaves me with such mixed emotions: joyous amazement at the vitality and accomplishments of youth in their church and community, and frustrated bewilderment that despite their proven abilities, some of them find their voices are limited or shut out altogether in the church's decision-making bodies. As one writer (p. 20) puts it:

> *Young adults often feel dismissed—whether that be the intention or not—at least for a few years, until we have aged sufficiently to be taken seriously, or until we have children in the Sunday school and have a "right" to speak to church issues. We find ourselves feeling frustrated, voiceless and oftentimes ignored.*

That is not only sad, it is unconscionably bad stewardship. Worse, haven't those of us now in leadership positions been there ourselves? Don't we remember being idealistic, creative, energetic teens who wanted to be older in order to have the associated responsibility and power to make life- and world-changing decisions? And now that we are older, have we forgotten this at the same time that we pine for youthful beauty and recklessness and have mid-life crises?

Editorial license covers the dangers of over-reaching generalities, but the essence of the great divide between youth and adulthood remains, as several of the stories in this issue reveal. Yet young people in the church continue to prove that responsibility is not the preserve of 30-and-overs.

Sure, there is a carefree tendency towards life and simplicity about ideology when one is young. But one might counter that diminished creativity and risk-taking among adults is not always for the better. And in neither case must it be so.

And what is the difference between the idealism of youth and the hide-bound entrenched views of adults except who has the money to foist their opinions on others? The truth is that both the church and the wider community need the wisdom and vitality of young and old alike.

Denominational numbers for most mainline churches in the United States and Canada are falling. Even among churches with strong youth programs, Barna Group research in the U.S. published just a year ago found that most teenagers leave the church in their twenties and stay away—even when they have their own children.

What this means is that churches that fail to integrate the interest and viewpoints of youth are losing the opportunity to hear from those people—possibly forever. And if they aren't coming back … well, the writing is on the wall—and the wall is crumbling.

The thing is, there are so many opportunities for congregations to incorporate youth into their corporate life and there are so many capable teenagers out there, as our stories reveal.

At the local church level, leadership training can begin by inviting youth on to various committees to participate fully in the discussions and activities. As they gain confidence, perhaps they can move to a position on the board of managers.

After that, there is session, for which one has to be an elder. But despite the moniker, elders do not have to be old. In fact, there are no age restrictions on becoming an elder. What is most needed is a welcoming session and congregation.

Presbyteries and synods too can do their part in youth participation and leadership formation by asking youth to be part of any number of advisory and decision-making bodies.

Instead of providing programs *for* youth, perhaps congregations should focus on programs *with* youth. Maybe a few more would stick around in the years to come.

David Harris

Letters



Marrying denominations

With reference to May's article When Congregations Marry, four denominations, Anglican, Mennonite-Conference, Presbyterian and United comprise the Pinawa Christian Fellowship congregation. These denominations have been worshipping together in a school gymnasium for more that 40 years. Our current minister is Rev. Robert Murray, a Presbyterian.

JOHN E. GUTHRIE, PINAWA, MAN.

Praise for Fosdick

As someone who attended Riverside Church, New York, a number of times in the 1950s and early '60s when Rev. Harry Emerson Fosdick was the minister, I read with great interest March's Grant Us Wisdom and am glad to know there is concern about our often-shallow response to Christ, especially in the mainline churches. Andrew Faiz's recollections of and garnerings from the Fosdick Convocation at Riverside are food for thought and a call to prayer and action.

ANN E. MCJANET, NEPEAN, ONT.

Humbling our leaders

Thanks Peter Bush for his series By The Numbers, particularly the March article. As he notes: "Humility helps leaders, both ordained and lay, discover the church is not about them, but rather is about God."

With this in mind, skilled leaders (ordained and lay) should begin facilitation with their congregations on values, essence, message and principles.

HILDE G. MORDEN, STRATHROY, ONT.

A noble vision

The article in May by Gloria Wasacase, A Good Thing, was a breath of fresh air. At long last I have read in the *Presbyterian Record* positive and grateful words about the ministry of our residential schools. I had come to think that our church had forgotten the devotion and the commitment of the pioneer missionaries who founded and laboured at these schools from 1884 (Round Lake) and onward. In 1934, former students from that school erected and dedicated a fieldstone cairn in memory of their beloved Dr. Hugh McKay who served among them for 40 years.

Our church established, built and staffed residential schools at a time when education was not being provided elsewhere for First Nations children. From the time the government intervened in the support and in some cases the rebuilding of some of the schools as Gloria mentioned, there was a change in the staff that worked there.

I deeply regret the traumatic events of the past half century or so which have cast a dark cloud over everything and everyone. But we must not forget the more noble vision, commitment and the intent of the half century before.

My father and his brother each taught at Round Lake school for a year prior to entering Knox College. Living in Prince Albert as we were when I was young, the Mistawasis mission and school were well known to us.

Many dedicated people devoted their lives to serve First Nations people in these schools. I give thanks

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Pontius' Puddle



also for the many children who have learned to read and write English and were otherwise prepared and enabled to enter into the world today. And I will always remember how eager Mr. Goodvoice was to have his sons in our school more than 50 years ago.

Thank you Gloria for your personal tribute.

MARGARET TAYLOR, ELMIRA, ONT.

Good chick-lit?

As a voracious reader, I was interested in the June review of Christian chick-lit, The Worst Stories Ever Told. I agree that many novels are totally insipid.

However, there are some GREAT Christian chick-lit authors out there—and believe me, I see a lot of books! It's my job to know what is good and what is simply not so good in the world of Christian publishing! My favourites so far?

Reconstructing Natalie, Dreaming in Black & White and *Dreaming in Technicolor*, all by Laura Jensen Walker; *Kissing Adrien*, by Siri Mitchell and *Savannah From Savannah*, by Denise Hildreth.

The Ashley Stockingdale series is funny too: *What a Girl Wants* is the first book in the series. I have blogged about some of these titles at: www.ellenisat.blogspot.com

ELLEN R. GRAF, MANAGER, MEDIA & CONSUMER RELATIONS, R.G. MITCHELL FAMILY BOOKS INC

I read the review and wondered why these books were chosen? I have never even heard of the three mentioned or their authors! Why don't you review books that we are actually reading? I read fiction by Dee Henderson, Karen Kingsbury, Susan Meissner, Davis Bunn, Tracie Peterson, Michael Philips, Bode Thoene and many others. I would appreciate reviews on some of their books rather than something completely foreign to me. Thanks!

LOREEN ENS, BY E-MAIL

Editor's note: These books were sent to the Record *for review by the publishers*

She likes it!

As soon as the May issue arrived I had to write. The new art director is doing a fantastic job giving a fresh look to the magazine and I was very happy with the layout of the story I wrote. The overall colours, new fonts and news selection made this issue stand out for me. With all this talk about the *Globe and Mail*'s new design I thought I should send my congrats your way.

JENNIFER HIGGS, AXIOM NEWS

Prisons and Presbyterians

As a hospital chaplain in Kingston where there are no fewer than seven federal prisons, I read with interest that the Presbyterian Church recently signed a revised agreement with Correctional Services to ensure the provision of spiritual care to this needy population in our midst (May *Record*). It's too bad this gesture does not extend to supporting our clergy in applying to vacant positions for chaplains within these institutions. Currently, Kingston penitentiary has an urgent need for a protestant chaplain. The PCC does not encourage individual presbyteries to enter into contractual agreements with Correctional Services on behalf of a chaplain, thus preventing clergy from applying. We have a mission field on our own doorstep and no one to fill the need, because the church doesn't want to become involved in third-party contracts.

REV. NANCY A. BETTRIDGE, KINGSTON, ONT.

Wildly presumptutous

Regarding the May letter suggesting that fair trade is "not in the interest of (small) growers." I am not surprised that *The Economist* magazine is critical of fair trade. The global economic community continues to blindly extol the virtues of "free market" capitalism, yet this system is failing farmers around the world, particularly those in developing countries.

I know some coffee farmers in Nicaragua. Under the free market, these full-time coffee farmers do not make enough money to send their kids to elementary school. Most live in homemade houses of mud and tin with no running water. It seems wildly presumptuous of us to tell these farmers that receiving a better price for their coffee is "not in their interests."

What are their options? The local and global market is flooded with subsidized corn and cotton from rich countries, making these crops even less economical. From an ecological standpoint, coffee is an ideal crop for many tropical areas because is grows best under the shade of forest trees. "Crop diversification" as suggested by *The Economist* would likely mean deforestation of hillsides and erosion. Fair trade can provide just enough extra income to keep coffee farmers on the land rather than moving to the urban slums.

SIMON JACQUES, GUELPH, ONT.

In his letter to the editor in May, Coos De Vries quotes *The Economist* to argue that "it is both bad farming practice and bad economics." What he fails to point out is that fair trade does not make any promise to consumers. Fair trade promises to pay producers a premium price for the products. What retailers do after fair trade products arrive at the local shelves is neither good nor bad. Local retailers will charge what local markets will bear.

Fair trade was set up to improve the lives of local producers and farmers. If paying the premium price (marginal amounts to consumers in the North, yet substantial for the farmers in the South) doubles the income for farmers, then, the goal has been achieved. By opting to buy fair trade, one can be assured local farmers are indeed benefitting.

WALLY HONG, NIAGARA FALLS, ONT.

Christ as metaphor

The Letters section of the May Record introduced the vexed problem of metaphor and how it should be viewed.

At the conscious level, metaphor presents us with a seeming understanding of what is really being said, but in reality Christ is being mirrored in metaphor, as a journey towards the portals of what we term our unconscious, where subjective insights can be hopefully approached, and eventually mapped and understood at another level.

The historical Jesus is our first step in the journey. His manifest story is a setting for his real story—our place in the cosmos and our connection to God.

DENNIS SUTHERLAND, VICTORIA, B.C.

Correction

Rev. Margaret Mullin is executive director of the Winnipeg Inner City Missions, which includes both Anishinabe Fellowship Centre and Flora House. Incorrect information appeared in the May issue. ■

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People & Places

For more People & Places submissions, please visit our website:
www.presbyterianrecord.ca



Linda Webber, Chelsea Webber and Rev. David Webber visited First, Penetanguishene, Ont., where Rev. Mark Wolfe is the minister, during their eastern Canada visit in May. Webber spoke about the Cariboo Ministry located in remote parts of British Columbia. First's mission committee raised more than $1,400 for Cariboo.



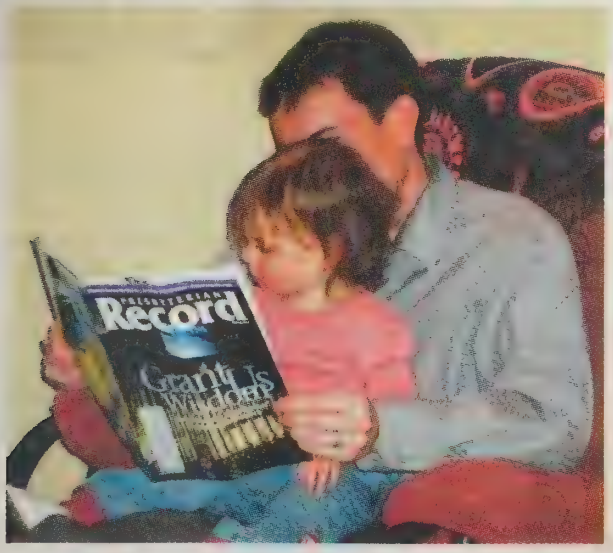
The folks at Knox, Waterdown, Ont., may be on to something. They educated themselves about the situation in Malawi, particularly that evangelists often have to travel long distances on foot. Now here is the tricky part: during Lent, every time they felt gratitude that they didn't regularly face such arduous hardships, they dropped a quarter into their bottle banks. They had a lot of gratitude in Waterdown—they raised enough money for 35 bicycles for Malawi. Jean Wilkinson with the walking stick and Paul Smart on the bicycle are two "Malawi evangelists." Also on the team: Ann Lynn, Carol Brown, Vicky Gerber, Pat Nicholson, Sheilah Dickson and Betty Porterfield.



Lester Marshall, 79, is a "fit" member of Victoria, Sault Ste. Marie, Ont. In the summer he diligently cycles to church from his home in the country. The church service begins at 9:15, all seasons. This picture was taken soon after his arrival one Sunday morning.



From young to young-at-heart: Here's the young part, the Kids for Christ group from St. Matthew's, Wallace, N.S., on their picnic afternoon in June. Jeff Brander, Emily Flynn, Haley Jameison, Jordon Reid, Jessie Flynn, Maggie Dewar, Bobbi Dewar, Christopher Brander.
For the rest you'll have to go to our website, where you'll find the colourful aprons and two birthday cakes, one with a 90 on it, the other with 97.



A moment of record, no doubt: He, Colin, is an elder at Central, Cambridge, Ont., and sits on the Internet Advisory Committee of the Life and Mission Agency. She is Hannah, 18 months old. Behind the camera was her mom Arminta.

Had cake lately?

Share your celebrations with the rest of the church.
Send your stories to PnP@presbyterianrecord.ca along with your digital photographs, **300 dpi minimum, high quality JPEGs**.
Or mail the photographs to:
The Record, 50 Wynford Dr., Toronto, M3C 1J7.

To be considered for People and Places, photographs should be sharp and everyone clearly identified. The *Record* reserves the right to reject any photos not of sufficient quality.
Photographs cannot be returned.

Also on our website

Wedding anniversaries in Brandon, celebrating the organ in Smithville, receiving the Order of Canada in Winchester, and other stories of faith and mission.

SPOTLIGHT



Barb Summers, newly-hired communications coordinator for PWS&D, is shown in Ethiopia in 2005. Summers travelled there with her previous employer to celebrate the opening of a new school. Although the Presbyterian Church doesn't work directly in Ethiopia, it supports work in the African country through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

More Staff Shuffled at 50 Wynford

STAFF CHANGES CONTINUE at the church's head office. Keith Knight has resigned as associate secretary for Resource Production and Communication to pursue other career opportunities. Knight served in the position for more than eight years, and led the re-vamping of the church's website.

"Retirements and transitions always bring about changes in offices," said Rev. Rick Fee, general secretary of the Life and Mission Agency. "The LMA will take this opportunity to see where we might consider new options to be responsive to the needs of congregations."

Fee said a Congregational Resourcing Centre will be created as of Sept. 1 as a two-year pilot project. The centre will combine the office of Worship and Evangelism with Christian Education and Ministry with Children and Youth, and will provide "timely, excellent resources, links and responses to help congregations in their ministry."

After nearly nine years of service, Rev. Dr. Jim Czegledi resigned as associate secretary for Evangelism and Worship, effective October 31. Czegledi plans to study interim ministry and pursue further training in leadership coaching.

At Presbyterian World Service and Development, Barb Summers has replaced Karen Plater as the new communications coordinator. Summers has extensive communications experience in both the non-profit and corporate sectors.

PWS&D also announced the arrival of Rev. Glynis Williams who will assume Colleen McCue's refugee program portfolio while she is on maternity leave. Williams has 19 years' experience in refugee ministry and is director of Action Réfugiés in Montreal. She recently returned from Syria, where she worked with Iraqi refugees through the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. Diana Kellington will assume McCue's finance and administration duties.

Also at PWS&D, Cecilia Gruber replaces program assistant Jennifer Feasby, who is continuing her studies; and John Popiel has finished his contract work as program coordinator for Latin America and Eastern Europe.

The Pension and Benefits office has Sandra Horne filling in for plan administrator Nicole Jeffrey while she takes maternity leave; and in the finance department, Barbara Nawratil moves from the mission interpretation office to the position of senior administrator and assistant to the chief financial officer. She replaces Elza Furzer, who retired this summer after 10 years at head office. ■ *–AM*

New Deal for Foodgrains Bank



THE CANADIAN FOODGRAINS BANK has signed a new five-year agreement with the Canadian International Development Agency worth $20 million per year. This is up from the three-year, $16-million arrangement the agencies previously shared. Signed in July, the agreement also offers greater flexibility in programming. The good news was officially announced on July 19 at a celebration in Manitoba.

"I didn't get everything we wanted, but we can certainly work with this agreement," said executive director Jim Cornelius in a press release. "Thank you to the Foodgrains Bank supporters who lobbied their MPs on our behalf."

Cornelius told the *Record* that the board of directors is generally satisfied with the terms of the agreement which, in addition to the points noted above, include the following:

- Continued flexibility to use CIDA cash resources to support nutrition programming.
- New flexibility to fund cash-based food security activities with CIDA's matching contribution (which increases the ability to support food security activities from $2 million a year to $5.5 million a year).
- An increase in funding for CFGB's public engagement and public policy programs.
- A new results and performance measurement framework.

"Our efforts to end hunger just got a little stronger," said Heather Plett, CFGB's communications director.

CFGB's annual fall information meetings will be held November 26-30, and are open to anyone who is interested in learning more about the Foodgrains Bank. More information will be posted on their website as it becomes available. Visit www.foodgrainsbank.ca. ■ *–AM*

PHOTOGRAPHY: DAN WIENS, CFGB

Presbyterian Responds to Pope's Statement

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH was represented on national television in July when Rev. Stephen Kendall, principal clerk, shared his opinion on the Pope's recent comments. Kendall was asked by CTV News to reflect on Protestant church leaders being enraged about Pope Benedict's statement that the Catholic Church is the only true church.

"In Canada, we are very fortunate to have excellent ecumenical relationships with the Catholic Church," said Kendall on air. "We sit together as full members of the Canadian Council of Churches, we work on justice issues through Kairos, we have worked faithfully together on the Residential Schools Settlement Agreement and we have opportunities for dialogue through our invitation to the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. I don't expect the Vatican statement to in any way undo the long-standing and respectful relations we have enjoyed together."

Benedict approved a document from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith that reiterates traditional teaching on Christian relations. In addition to reviving Latin mass, he noted that Protestant churches are not true churches because they do not have apostolic succession—the ability to trace their bishops back to Christ's apostles, and therefore did not have the "means of salvation."

He said Orthodox churches, though they have apostolic succession, are nevertheless "wounded" because they do not recognize the primacy of the pope.

Kendall noted that the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (of which the PCC is a member) has indicated it was puzzled by the statement, but suspected that the Reformed-Catholic dialogue would be the place to discuss it further. Kendall suspects the statement will also come up in meetings with the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops this fall.

"In Canada we have learned to live and work in a context of religious and theological diversity and that is what we will continue to do," Kendall told the *Record*. ■ *–AM*

PWS&D Mops Up

Storm-hit Pakistan and China receive Presbyterian aid.



A group of women with their food packages



Noor Bibi of Pakistan lost her house and two Goats to a storm.

HUNDREDS ARE DEAD, thousands are injured and hundreds of thousands of people are homeless or displaced after tropical cyclone Yemyin brought torrential rains, massive flooding and high winds to Pakistan in late June. The rain was hampering rescue operations, though Presbyterian World Service & Development, through Church World Service Pakistan/Afghanistan and the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, has sent 1,000 food packages (composed of 80 kg of wheat flour, as well as rice, beans and oil) to 1,000 families. The packages provide a month's ration for a family of eight to10 people. This is the first time CFGB funds have been used for an immediate disaster response.

"People have settled in makeshift spontaneous camps without sanitation facilities, clean water, or access to food," said Guy Smagghe, PWS&D's program coordinator for Asia. "People just try to find a place where they can find temporary shelter until they can get a place of their own again."

Stagnant, dirty water and rotting animal carcasses are causing health concerns in many parts of Pakistan. Because of this, plastic sheets for temporary shelters and to protect drinking water sources from further contamination will also be distributed. The Canadian government is also playing a role in PWS&D's contributions through CIDA matching funds.

People try to find temporary shelter until they can get a place of their own again

A quick response is crucial in order to prevent outbreaks of disease —something that happens quickly in make-shift camps. While immediate needs are being met, further assessments continue, including evaluating the need for psychosocial support, health care, and eventually the rebuilding of homes and infrastructure.

If all goes according to plan, Smagghe hopes to travel with PWS&D director Ken Kim to Pakistan and Afghanistan sometime in November to survey the work taking place.

"Local partners know the areas well and know how to design an appropriate response to the people's needs. They also have contacts with suppliers who give them the best prices on the market so that every dollar's impact is maximized," said Smagghe. "These partners send us updates on the situations and request our assistance for their response."

Meanwhile, in southern China, more than 31 million people have been affected by seemingly never-ending rains, causing flooding and mudslides. Thousands have lost their homes or have been evacuated, more than four million hectares of crops have been affected, and access to clean water is severely limited. Fleeing from their own flooded dwellings,

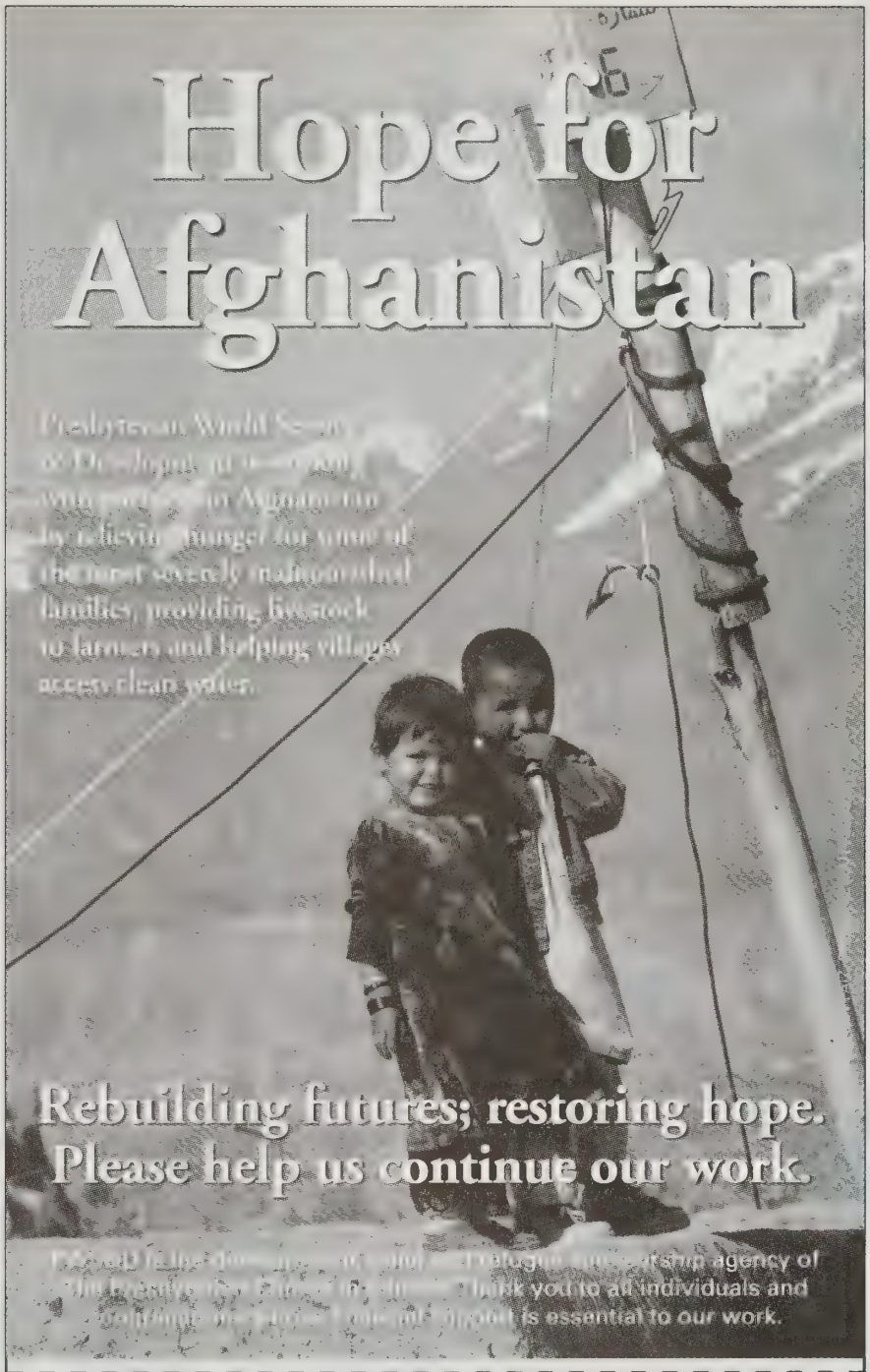
millions of rats have overrun villages, destroying what crops are left. Schools, clinics and hospitals have also been washed out. As of July, 360 people had died, while economic losses climbed to nearly $1.4 billion.

PWS&D is helping 5,000 families recover from the crisis though the Amity Foundation by distributing rice, quilts, blankets and mosquito nets. Five water facilities will be rehabilitated, and five irrigation and flood prevention facilities will be built to help farmers resume production and help minimize their exposure to future floods. *–AM with files from Church World Service Pakistan/Afghanistan and PWS&D* ■

Disaster Response

When a disaster hits, the faster aid is given, the better. Coordinating relief efforts is a huge task, involving numerous individuals and agencies at various levels. The following is a brief look at what happens when a disaster strikes:

1. **Survey groups arrive in flood affected regions.**
2. **Assessment teams, made up of representatives from many agencies, are dispatched to affected areas to plan the response in the most effective manner.**
3. **Immediate needs such as water, food and shelter are tended to first.**
4. **Local agencies design a response and contact donor partners for assistance.**
5. **Donors (like PWS&D) assess available resources, and inform Canadians about the situation, hoping they will help increase the contribution.**
6. **PWS&D sends funds to local partners, who use the donation to fulfill the already-identified needs.**
7. **Local partner reports back on progress.**



For more information or to make a donation, write or call:

Presbyterian World Service & Development (PWS&D)

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Wynford Goes Green

The beginning of a journey. BY JOAN MASTERTON



DON'T LOOK NOW, but did you notice? The paradigm ... it shifted. Historians will likely look back on 2007 as the year that climate change and global warming became part of the global lexicon.

At the 133rd General Assembly held in Waterloo, Ont., earlier this year, a resolution was passed encouraging congregations to have an energy audit conducted on their buildings and to implement energy conservation measures that are financially feasible. Energy production, transmission and consumption are major causes of emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Reducing consumption of energy is a healthy first step toward becoming a more balanced member of the global biosphere. Not only is it financially feasible, but it has the added benefit of saving money!

In an effort to help congregations take first steps down this path, employees of the national office of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, located at 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, decided to put their heads together. The Wynford Green Team was created with the approval of the Management Team with the goal to "learn as we go," pool our knowledge and take steps to be less consumptive of not only energy, but water, paper and other components of any busy office.

One of the first steps is to identify what we are doing right and well

One of the first steps is to identify what we are doing right and well. Then we want to learn how we can improve. Our progress will be communicated regularly on the PCC website and occasionally the *Record* may drop in to see how we are doing. We also know that there are congregations who have already taken positive measures and who could be a source of information and guidance for us and for other congregations. We encourage communication and cross fertilization of ideas.

The Green Team meets over litterless lunches. Enthusiastic employees have identified specific issues they will investigate, and then bring their understanding back to the team. There is a whole new language to learn. What exactly is a "carbon footprint" and how do we calculate it? What does it mean to be "carbon neutral"? What is "bullfrog power"?

We have much to learn and a long way to go, but we understand that if we as a society are to truly honour God's sacred creation and if we are to better exercise our mandate of justice for all, we must change our habits. The national staff want to be part of the solution and it might even be fun! Stay tuned for updates and share your congregation's experiences with greening by writing to the *Presbyterian Record*(letters@presbyterianrecord.ca) or e-mailing Alex Macdonald, the Wynford Green Team coordinator (amacdonald@presbyterian.ca). ■



Recording a Moment in Time

A snapshot of the church. BY AMY MACLACHLAN

A TIME CAPSULE of worship resources used by Presbyterian congregations is currently being created and will be sealed and stored for 50 years. The General Assembly approved the project in 2006, and the committee on history with the help of the national archives, is administering it.

"It's a tangible way to see the various forms of worship, as well as the similarities, within the denomination at this point in time," said Kim Arnold, archivist.

The idea came from Rev. Dr. Fred Rennie, secretary of the Experimental Fund, which is funding the project.

While gathering the archival records of his congregation, Rennie realized that printed materials of his church's historical life were virtually non-existent. Even more disheartening was the

"It's a tangible way to see the various forms of worship, as well as the similarities, within the denomination at this point in time"

likelihood that similar situations can be found across the denomination.

Hoping to change this trend, Rennie devised the Moment in Time project—a snapshot of the church at a particular moment that can be used by researchers, historians and social scientists in the future. "Such materials will say that at a particular 'Moment in Time' this is what we as Christian people of the Presbyterian persuasion in Canada were about," said Rennie, as quoted in the 2006 Acts and Proceedings.

He also saw it as a fitting endeavour for the church's Year of Sabbath, a time he hoped would be used for "reflection on where we have come from as a church on both local and national levels."

Seventy-three congregations have submitted materials so far, which can include hymns, sermons, prayers, orders of service, children's stories, and music used. Congregations are supposed to choose an average Sunday, and also include information on attendance (with age and gender breakdown, and Sunday school attendance), as well as photos of the worshipping area and congregation, if desired. The official

deadline for submissions is Nov. 25, though materials will still be accepted after that time. . ■ *–AM*

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WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF



Alpha not omega

ENI—Few churches see sustained growth as a result of Alpha courses, a new study argues, despite the popularity of this introduction to the essentials of Christianity.

Alpha's organisers claim that more than 8 million people worldwide have attended one of their courses through almost 40,000 churches.

But according to Andrew Brookes, editor of *The Alpha Phenomenon*, "Most Alpha churches only run the course five and a half times, and not enough to get serious outreach. I think this is an area which needs much more attention."

The Alpha course was devised 30 years ago by Rev. Charles Marnham, then an Anglican curate in London. The course ran for four weeks and was for people who wanted to know more about Christianity.

Alpha now takes the form of a series of talks addressing key issues related to the Christian faith; each session begins with a meal and the course ends with a special celebration supper.

"The course in itself is not sufficient to sustain outreach, which requires a raft of other strategies to produce sustained growth," says Brookes. These include greater lay participation through the development of what he calls pastorates, or groups of up to 30 people who meet once every two weeks for study and prayer, and to share a meal together.

Alpha is often seen as controversial. Critics say it offers a comfortable, individualistic version of the Christian faith, and particularly attracts affluent and professional young people.

Holy Land needs transformation

ENI—Rev. Samuel Kobia, head of the World Council of Churches, urged ordinary people in the Middle East to take action to promote peace and justice in the Holy Land.

"Jerusalem and Palestine are in need of transformation," Kobia told a congregation in Jerusalem. "The desired change will be brought about not by the powerful and the mighty but by ordinary people. It is the power of the powerless that causes change to occur."

On the same day, the WCC leader visited the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem, and, with Jerusalem Lutheran Bishop Munib Younan, laid a wreath in the Ohel Yiskor memorial hall.

Bishop Younan said, "We, as a suffering church of Arab Christians, need churches of the world to help us to keep the hope."

The WCC was founded in 1948 and has 347 member churches, including The Presbyterian Church in Canada. The Roman Catholic Church is not a member but has representatives on some WCC bodies.

Prayer unifies Korea

ENI—Christians from both parts of divided Korea have prayed together for the reunification of their country, which has been split in two by a militarized demarcation line since the end of the 1950-1953 Korean War.

The National Council of Churches in (South) Korea and the (North) Korean Christian Federation organized a joint prayer meeting to affirm their intention to work towards peaceful reunification.

The head of the Salvation Army in South Korea, General Chun Kwang-pyo, said, "The two Koreas have been divided for 62 years ... the joint declaration is our hope for reunification, and churches in the North and the South will do their best to make it happen."

In a joint declaration, participants at the June prayer meeting urged further cooperation between the two Koreas in order to achieve unification. The gathering also discussed ways of giving practical assistance to the North. Representatives from the Assemblies of God denomination at the meeting offered support to 40 local churches in the North, while the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea discussed the possibility of building a public nursery. The Korean Christian Federation also asked for support to provide medical equipment for a hospital that treats heart complaints.

Thou shalt not drive badly!

ENI—The Vatican has issued Ten Commandments for motorists:

I. You shall not kill.
II. The road shall be for you a means of communion between people and not of mortal harm.
III. Courtesy, uprightness and prudence will help you deal with unforeseen events.
IV. Be charitable and help your neighbour in need, especially victims of accidents.
V. Cars shall not be for you an expression of power and domination, and an occasion of sin.
VI. Charitably convince the young and not so young not to drive when they are not in a fitting condition to do so.
VII. Support the families of accident victims.
VIII. Bring guilty motorists and their victims together, at the appropriate time, so that they can undergo the liberating experience of forgiveness.
IX. On the road, protect the more vulnerable party.
X. Feel responsible towards others. ■

Pretense, Hypocrisy, Smugness

And some other pastimes. BY ANDREW FAIZ


Looking upon the Pacific.

Bald eagles are diving lazily into the Pacific, outside this cottage on a northern Gulf island, three ferry rides away from Vancouver. In a few hours the ocean will pull back a hundred or more metres, exposing star fish, oysters, clams, crabs and a myriad other life forms. There are snow-capped mountains in the distance; the whole scene is stunningly beautiful, and awe-inspiring and apparently sole proof of some (G)od's existence—or so this island's residents keep telling me. (By the time you read this, I'll also have been to the Atlantic Provinces; if I manage to make it to the North this calendar year, I can finally be a Canadian.)

This island, like so much of what is sniggeringly called The Left Coast, is a place where people have chosen to live after willingly rejecting society's grid. Business people, lawyers and other rat-racers, who once had success in their chosen fields, have forsaken those false gods to come here and pursue a more spiritual life. Others have run from societal constraints on their sexuality or their political sensibility. They have rejected Mammon in favour of Nature. They are on a spiritual quest.

Spiritual quest—a hint of Buddhism and Hinduism, something borrowed from various books of death (Tibetan, Incan), bits of world music, gardening, walking, marijuana (it's a common crop here) and of course, Nature. There is a whiff of the monk in them—they have tuned in, dropped out and turned on. The current community on this particular island did begin with communes, but those days are gone. There is no more nude gardening; there are families here now, a public school, markets. It is increasingly bourgeois, and like in many other spiritual environments people talk a lot about money. That may be the only thing they have in common with the religious world.

The one place they do not turn for their spiritual growth is the mainline church—it is seen to be too aligned with society, perhaps even its primal source. When I mention my day job I am treated to one of two responses: silence or indignation. I find it cute, but at the same time I understand their caution.

They are running away from the social conditioning they associate with religion: pretense of happiness, hypocrisy of perfection, smugness of moral superiority. Their anger against the Christian church is palpable. And, I, for one, don't blame them. My God—the monotheistic, Middle Eastern God—has been ill-treated by His own followers, who have dedicated their vulgar behaviour in His name. The church—occasionally even ours, down to its congregational level—has a long history of replacing grace and love with a punitive God, who is mean-spirited and over-sensitive. If that were my experience of God, I too would grab the first ferry out of town, randomly collect deep thoughts and worship Nature.

But I'm either lucky or naïve and continue with the church, despite its pretense, hypocrisy and smugness. And so I was deeply amused as I hung out on this island for half a week to discover that these religion escapees had their own form of smugness. It took me a while to recognize it but I sorta kinda got it after the sixth or seventh person told me they too were uptight city slickers like me once but thanks to the natural beauty and bounty of the island they had found spiritual peace.

I'm not about to move, though. It's easy to find spirituality when sucking on doobies as the sun sets over the Pacific. It's a whole other matter finding the same peace and love and grace at the corner of Yonge and Dundas in Toronto, or for a greater challenge yet, over coffee hour after worship. ■

Who Needs Sleep?

How Presbyterian youth are waking up the church.

Photography by Alex Luyckx

Presbyterian Young People Are...

BY ERIN WOODS

I have spent several months trying to write down something that captures the Presbyterian Young People's Society in words. At last I have come to a decision: I can't do it. It just isn't possible. Not if I want to express it properly, anyway. I could tell you, "Youth between the ages of 15 and 25 meet three times a year." I could say, "We worship in new ways." I could add mission projects, or discussion groups, or guest speakers, but those things are just what we do. I want to tell you what PYPS *is*.

To that end, I have constructed a list. Or, at least, I will have constructed it as soon as I've finished writing this. I have a feeling it is going to be sort of unusual, a little random and possibly a bit confusing. That's ok. At first glance, PYPS seems to be those things, too.

So here goes.

PYPS is...

God: But not Stand-in-the-choir-and-chant-Hallelujah God. Rather, Jump-up-and-down-and-scream-yourself-hoarse-because-He's-awesome God.

People: Young people. New people. Strangers, friends, mentors, crazy people of the loveable type.

Singing: New songs, old songs, praise songs, songs invented on the spur of the moment.

Food: Well, we can't forget that, can we? Good food, hot food, messy food eaten without utensils...

Laughing: Laughing in play, in discussions, in meetings, in worship–yes!--in worship, too.

Challenges: Don't worry—I don't mean challenges challenges. I mean, "Who can run this course and eat that food the fastest?" "Which team will invent the most creative superhero dressed up in these random items?" "Who will make the strongest newspaper armour?" "Who can collectively get the fewest hours of sleep throughout the entire weekend?" That last challenge, by the way, is not formal. PYPS does not condone, take responsibility for, etc., etc. But, you know, who needs sleep when you're having fun?

Travel: Ok, here's the thing. Our particular synod is the Synod of Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda. We've travelled all around Ontario, but now we want to go to Bermuda ... But someone always thinks it's a bad idea. Still, we've gotten to know every corner of our part of Ontario through PYPS.

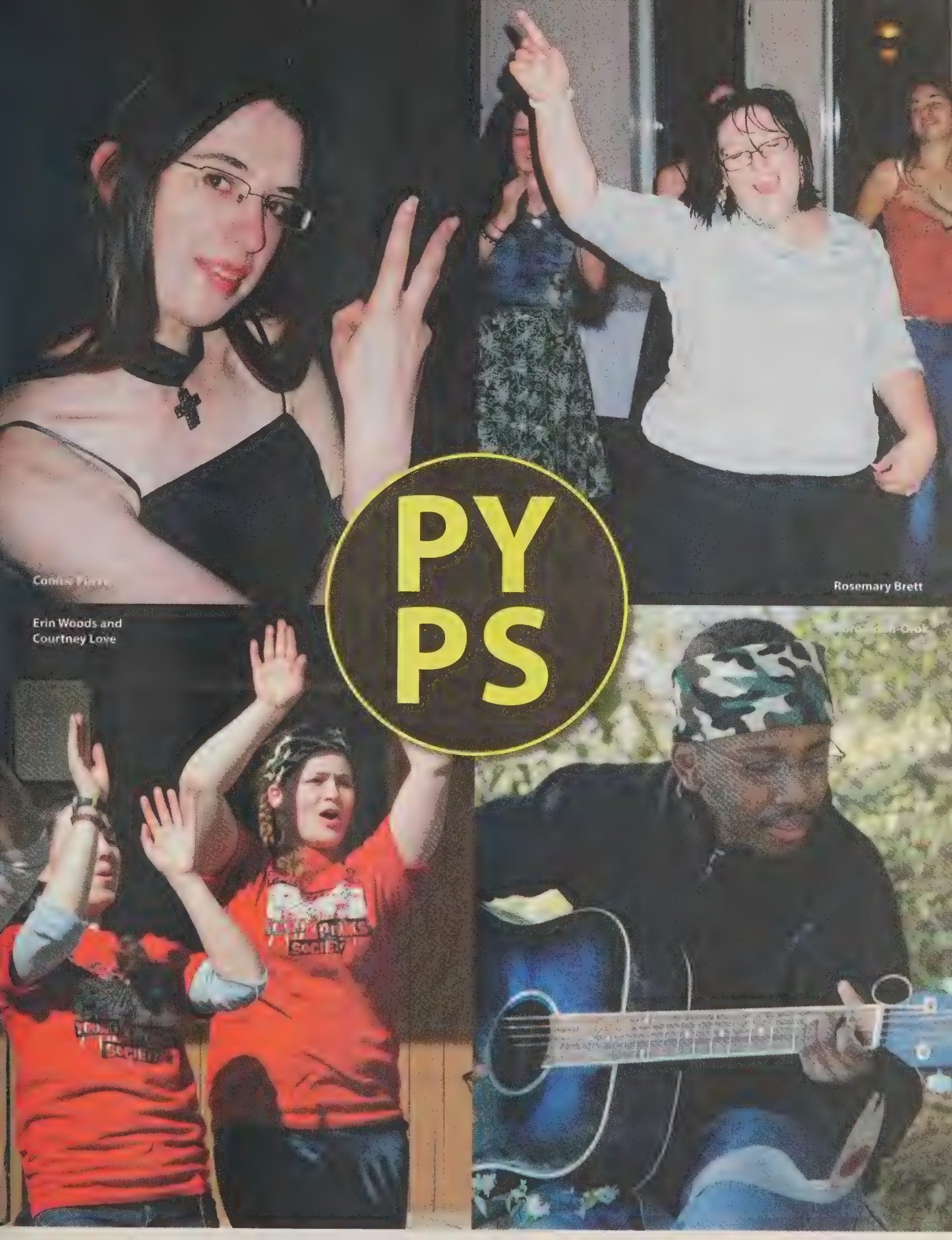
Silliness: Oh, yes, there is silliness. Sometimes I think that's what really holds us together. Giggling when the president makes jokes while reading the rules aloud. Grinning and groaning at old jokes from previous weekends that just keep coming back. Laughing uproariously at the skits and songs performed at PYPS talent shows. Just plain, healthy, silly fun.

Church: But fun church. Fast songs with words that mean something to our generation. Slow songs that come from our hearts. Drums and guitars to mix things up. Theme addresses on topics chosen by youth. Prayer in new ways. Church that is God-centered and youth-directed. Fun church.

Learning: Again, fun learning. About the church, about our world, about ourselves.

And that is what PYPS is. To a point. Actually, I could say more. A lot more. But I won't. You'll get bored. So I'm going to stop talking now. Really, I am. I mean it. Good bye. ■

Erin Woods is a member of Calvin, North Bay, Ont., and worship coordinator for the CNOB PYPS.


PY
PS
Rosemary Brett
Erin Woods and
Courtney Love

Look Out Church, Here They Come!

BY PATRICIA AND RYAN BROWNE

Our home church, like many Presbyterian churches, doesn't seem to have a place for us



This is our last year in Presbyterian Young People's Society. And now we are approaching the edge of a void with some trepidation. Behind us is a veritable army of friends, memories, laughter, prayer and passion for peer-oriented ministry. Somewhere in our distant church future may be session meetings, budgets, and AGMs. And the void we approach as we leave a decade of peer service in the Synod of Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda PYPS is where our church loses many of its 20- and 30-somethings.

For the past decade we have both been greatly involved in the ministry of our synod-wide youth organization. We have run events, planned worships, retreats, budgeted, organized finances, marketed and advertised our ministry and have grown and learned from others we have worked with. We consider ourselves to be qualified, experienced individuals with a strong background in peer ministry and event planning and organization. Our home church, like many Presbyterian churches, doesn't seem to have a place for us. We are approaching the void.

We are career starters, we are young adults, we are university graduates, newly married couples, and future-oriented individuals. We are motivated, dedicated and passionate. And there does not seem to be a place for us in our churches. Churches are focused on maintaining the large, influential groups. Young adults often feel dismissed—whether that be the intention or not—at least for a few years, until we have aged sufficiently to be taken seriously, or until we have children in the Sunday school and have a "right" to speak to church issues. We find ourselves feeling frustrated, voiceless and oftentimes ignored.

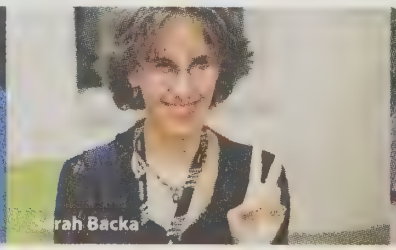
It sometimes seems that years of attending, planning, organizing and leading a synod-wide ministry count for nothing when we return to our home churches. The frustration of starting all over, of having to prove ourselves forces many of us to simply leave the church. And with the change in family planning, the focus on "career first," and the pressure of the outside world and workplace, the time between leaving the church after youth group and coming back with small children is ever widening.

A college and careers group was attempted within our home congregation. It went well at first, but quietly faded into fewer meetings, and fewer members. We wondered if it was the group itself. The consensus was that it was not, but that many of us didn't feel comfortable being a part of that group while not feeling a part of the congregation. So what are we doing wrong?

As youth and young adults we need to take responsibility for the lack of our peers in our congregations! Many young adults, ourselves included, have spent a long time putting the responsibility on our churches, on our elders, or the ministries available. As we leave PYPS and youth group and approach the void, we realize that we are the only ones who are truly responsible for filling that void. We've just spent a decade in peer-for-peer ministry, and now we're faced with starting all over. But at least this time, with PYPS behind us, we're equipped. We're prepared. We have the skills, the passion, and we recognize the need. So let's step up, young adults, let's make our voice known, and create a place by ourselves, for ourselves. And maybe—if we do it right—our peers will follow. ■

Patricia Browne is a member of St. Andrew's, Whitby, Ont., Ryan is a member of Knox, Oakville, Ont. Ryan is a past president, and Patricia the convention convener of CNOB PYPS.





Sarah Backa



Cleveland Steven, Lin-See W... Steph Von...



Patricia Browne & Brenden Sherratt

Travels Around Her Future

Venturing onto the high seas of Real Life. BY CONNIE PURVIS

As I stood in the bow of my boat and looked wide-eyed towards the land of Real Life, it left me breathless. I had heard of this world for a long time and its shadow had loomed over me throughout my undergraduate years and high school activities. But now it was within sight, yet still felt so far away, and it rose darkly through a thick mist which obscured its features.

Doubtless you have heard rumours about Real Life; its reputation inevitably precedes it. The land is a dangerous, worrisome place full of career paths, bills, taxes, car insurance, house insurance, life insurance, mortgages, downsizing and (perhaps most terrible for all of us who pursue higher education when its shores first come into view) student loan repayments. Yet it has its wonders too, or so I'm told, although many of them seem to be less certain than their unpleasant counterparts. Marriage and parenthood, in particular, seem to occupy some grey area between wonder and worry, but often they are lumped in with the former which is encouraging to all who seek such experiences.

The land itself is governed by a benevolent King who, despite His genuine desire to bring help and not harm (Jer. 29:11), has a penchant for surprises (Matt 24:36; Mark 13:32; Luke 17:26) and counterintuitive ways of enacting His will (see entire Bible). His methods prove somewhat problematic for the citizens of His Kingdom and, indeed, they are a source of frustration for newcomers to Real Life. Fortunately, such newcomers soon realize that the King of Real Life is the same enigmatic King who has governed them since birth. This is a consolation to most, but it does not diminish questions about what the strange new land has in store for its denizens.

As I planned for my eventual trip to this mythic land I was often advised to stock up on credentials. These, it seems, are like gold in Real Life. It is not enough for my generation of explorers to have a degree in their pocket and the world at their feet. Rather, one must have a degree, an impressive resume and plenty of extracurricular activities. One must plan ahead. Indeed, fellow adventurers, such advice is warranted as these credentials are most useful when navigating the treacherous terrain of Real Life.

As I worked towards my eventual voyage, I often exhausted myself with many involvements. Classes, essays, a part-time job, a place on the editorial board of an undergraduate journal, a vice-presidency of a campus club, membership in various other clubs, a role on the executive of the Presbyterian Young People's Society .... I never had time for rest, it seemed, and still I looked for things which might look good on a resume or an application for graduate school. And the risk I ran (indeed, the risk I still run, as there is still a year between my boat and that mist-covered shore) was to focus forever on the future and forget where I was and what I was doing. I was doing things for the credentials they would give me, not for their own sake. And in doing so, I fear I have missed a wonderful part of the journey. My activities became chores, not involvements which excited me and brought out my creativity. And the loss of creativity is a great loss indeed. And so, fellow

Apparently, somewhere in Real Life flows a river around an island called Some Day

explorers, may I offer another piece of advice. Plan for your arrival, but do not miss the journey, for by looking ever ahead much beauty passes us by unawares.

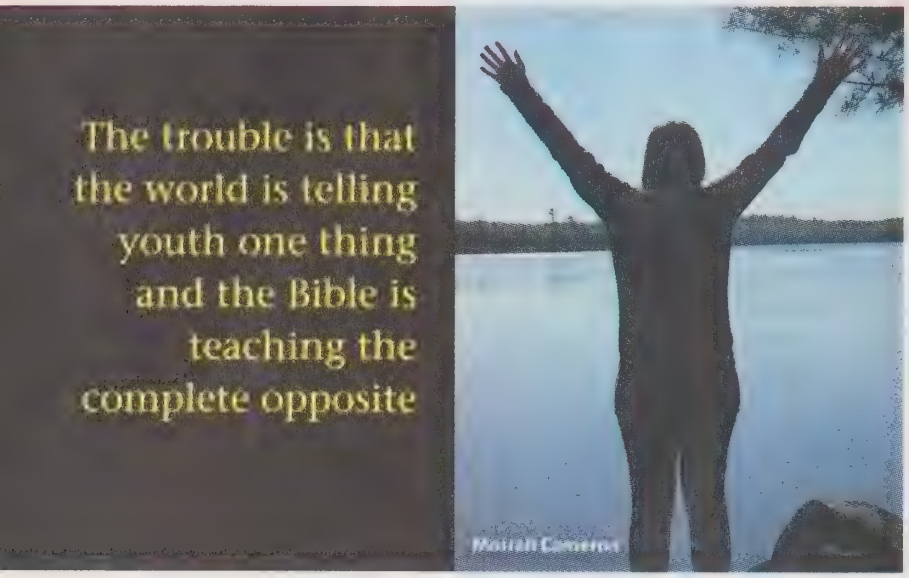
I shall leave you with a last rumour, interesting and unverified by myself. Apparently, somewhere in Real Life flows a river around an island called Some Day. This mythic shore is captured wonderfully by L. M. Montgomery, and as I have seen only glimpses of the place she writes of, I shall say little of it here. Apparently it is a beautiful, enchanting place, and I would very much like to see it. But the path is elusive, or so I have read, and thus if anyone knows the way, I ask that you tell it to me. For, despite my journeys thus far, I mistrust my sense of direction. I fear I always will. Perhaps, as I travel Real Life in the years to come, I will spy that isle—if only at a distance—for I have yet to meet one who has reached its shores. ■

Connie Purvis is a member of Westview, Toronto. She is a communications director for the CNOB PYPS.



Are You Telling Me Something?

It's not the message that needs changing, it's the way we approach it. BY ALEX LUYCKX



Arms nailed down
Are you telling me something?
Eyes turned out
Are you looking for someone?

Jars of Clay say it so beautifully in their song "Liquid" which appears on their self-titled album. So the question is: if Christ is telling us something—what is it? And are we listening?

For the past three years I've attended Oakville's Catholic Youth Organization's Way of the Cross. Youth from the Catholic parishes of the city, along with a few scattered from the other denominations, make their way solemnly from downtown Oakville, Ont., to the outskirts of the city stopping along the way to enact the Stations of the Cross. But is this message lost in today's society? We are being constantly bombarded by the media. No longer is it just print ads in the newspapers, commercials on television or radio. Billboards in bright flashing colours and large screen TVs glow long into the night distracting drivers inching their way along in rush hour traffic on clogged highways. Just take a walk along Yonge Street in Toronto and they will be there as well, similar to Times Square in New York City. Ads on websites, text message ads from your cell phone provider, and telemarketers calling to your home.

Can we actually hear what Christ is trying to tell us?

When Elijah was looking to hear a word from God did he hear it in the loud noises of the storm? No. He heard it in a small still voice. Are we drowning this out by allowing ourselves to get distracted by the loud noises of our modern society? Is this just another scheme of the devil's to keep us from hearing or spreading Christ's message? The youth of today are especially prone to this distraction, as we are one of the most highly targeted brackets of advertisers.

The trouble is that the world is telling youth one thing and the Bible is teaching the complete opposite. The world tells us that we have to get there on our own, that money is power, and if we seek out power, we won't have any more problems. Weakness is scorned and violence should be repaid with violence. Christ, on the other hand, teaches self-sacrifice. To be willing to humble ourselves, to be a servant and follow His example. To be willing to even die for another person. To turn the other cheek and forgive those who hurt us rather than seek our own vengeance.

This is the main problem that I see facing PYPS and the Church in general. So should we change the message? Should we gloss over the parts that aren't "in tune" with the world? No! The message must remain intact and unaltered—the Bible tells us so—but maybe a change in approach is required. Maybe we need to find ways to counter the attraction of the world. ■

Alex Luyckx is a member of Knox, Milton. He is a communications director for the CNOB PYPS.



Support Your Youth

Giving them money is good, showing you care is better. BY BRENDEN SHERRATT

It's no secret that churches are getting older. Churches all over our country have seen a drop in attendance of younger families and youth. Calvin, Kitchener, (my church) is no different. For years we have had a stable, but ever-growing-older congregation. Although Calvin operates the Children's Arts Program (a children's and youth music theatre summer camp), a breakfast program for the school across the street and a youth group; none of these programs have really kept youth and young families coming back to the church. For me, there was something missing that I could not quite put my finger on, and although they were trying many things, I didn't feel as connected with the church as I could be.

That all changed when I helped with a youth-led service, where I announced that a PYPS weekend was coming up and that if anyone was interested they should come and talk to me. I didn't really expect any newcomers to take interest, but I thought I would give it a try. Sure enough, no one asked me about the retreat and I kind of left it at that.

The next Sunday was something entirely different. After church, during our coffee hour, an older gentleman came up to me and said, "Brenden, tell me about PYPS." I joked that he was a little old to be going to the retreat. He probed further and asked how the response to my announcement had gone over with the youth and if anyone new was coming, to which the answers were no. It would just be my family and my girlfriend going. He wasn't satisfied with the answer I gave him.

He asked why others were not going. I said, "Well, money and the uncertainty of a new event." He excused himself to go talk to his wife and another member of the church. A little later, he called me over to them and told me that the church was willing to cover the cost of any youth who would be willing to come and that the church would pay for a van (providing transportation), which a church member would drive for safety. I had to take a step back, because I was not expecting that at all! That afternoon, I called around to all our youth in the church and had many answer "yes" and even more answer with "maybe." When I talked to many of the youth, they were more than surprised with the offer of full payment and transportation provided by my church. Still more people offered to help drive and baby-sit younger kids that some of the youth were responsible for. I was not amazed by the amount of money that was being donated to us; I was amazed by the amount of support that was given to us from my church. Churches always try to support their youth, but often we don't see it.

I challenge churches to take a stand and make sure that you are supporting your youth. It doesn't always take a donation of money but it can be something as easy as asking us how we are doing in school or coming to one of our events. Some churches have devoted themselves to their youth by appointing an elder just for youth and young families. If that doesn't show support I don't know what does. This older gentleman has done that for our church, he has said I want to support youth and I know my church wants to so let's get the ball rolling. There are people all over the country like this man, who care about the youth of their church. All they need to do is stand up for the youth and show that the church supports them in what ever they do. Anyone interested in standing up? ■

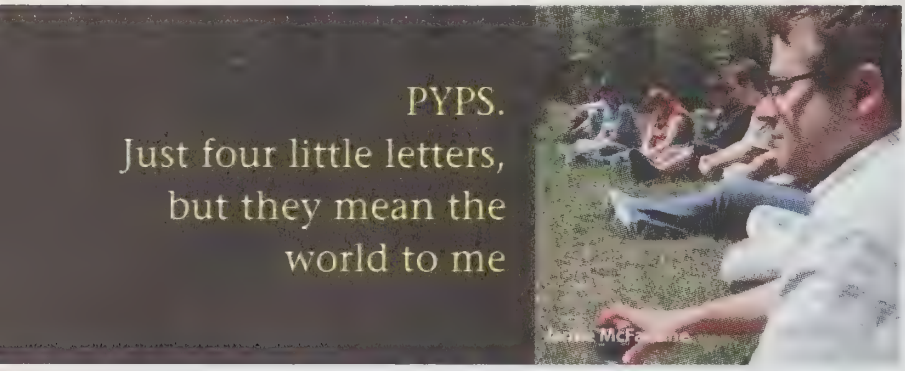
When I talked to many of the youth, they were more than surprised with the offer of full payment and transportation provided by my church

Brenden Sherratt is a member of Calvin, Kitchener, Ont. He is in his last month as the president of the CNOB PYPS.



Anatomy of a PYPS Weekend

The most awesomest thing ever! BY MICHAEL WATT



There are a few key things about a Presbyterian Young People's Society weekend that make it, well, a PYPS weekend. First, there is a speaker chosen for the weekend. I'm not sure how these speakers are chosen because I have yet to run a weekend, but they are chosen well. The speaker has several time spots allocated for talking to us about the theme that was chosen for the weekend. We like to call this a theme address. After the theme address, the group (i.e. all the youth at the weekend) breaks down into smaller discussion groups. These smaller groups go off and find a spot somewhere where they can talk about what they've heard.

Another key component of a PYPS weekend is the worship service. Ah yes, the worship service, possibly one of my favourite times. This is where things really get fun. At PYPS we do worship like most churches do: some readings from the Bible, a responsive reading here and there, and, of course you can't forget the music. Here is where things change drastically from any church that I've ever been to. First, the music that we play and the songs that we sing are far from the traditional pipe organ and choir music that you may be used to. These songs are played on the guitar, on the keyboard. There are drums, and people sing and dance. Yes, that's right. Dance. It's an amazing experience. I believe that we've actually scared some people with the amount of dancing that we have during certain songs. I will have to point out here that you don't have to dance when you go to PYPS. There are actually a good number of people who just like to watch the others dance. It doesn't matter to anyone, and that's the beauty of it.

After the worship service and the theme address, there is free time and organized games and fun stuff. These events have varied greatly. From curling to square dancing to taking a ferry ride, almost anything is possible, provided it's within the budget. And the free time is exactly what it sounds like. Free time to go find your friends and just hang out and relax, because, believe me, you need time to rest during the day.

When you're at PYPS, you know that you're going to be with friends. Friends who know God and who won't judge you based on your religion or way of praising His honour. It's a liberating experience, being able to just cut loose and sing at the top of your lungs and dance like a fool because you know that there are at least a dozen others dancing and singing with you. You also know when you're at PYPS, you won't be alone. There are so many diverse youth who attend a weekend that you'll always find someone you can talk to because everyone there has something in common. This is not to say that no groups are formed. That's just human nature. It happens any time a large group gets together, but at PYPS, these groups are completely open. There is no other place that I know of where different groups of people are so open and understanding.

I'm not going to lie. When I first showed up at PYPS, my first thought was something along the lines of: "Man, these people are crazy." But that was followed shortly by: "This is the most awesomest thing ever!" (And yes, I make up words when I talk to myself.) It really was, and is, the most awesomest thing that I've done yet in my life.

PYPS. Just four little letters, but they mean the world to me. ■

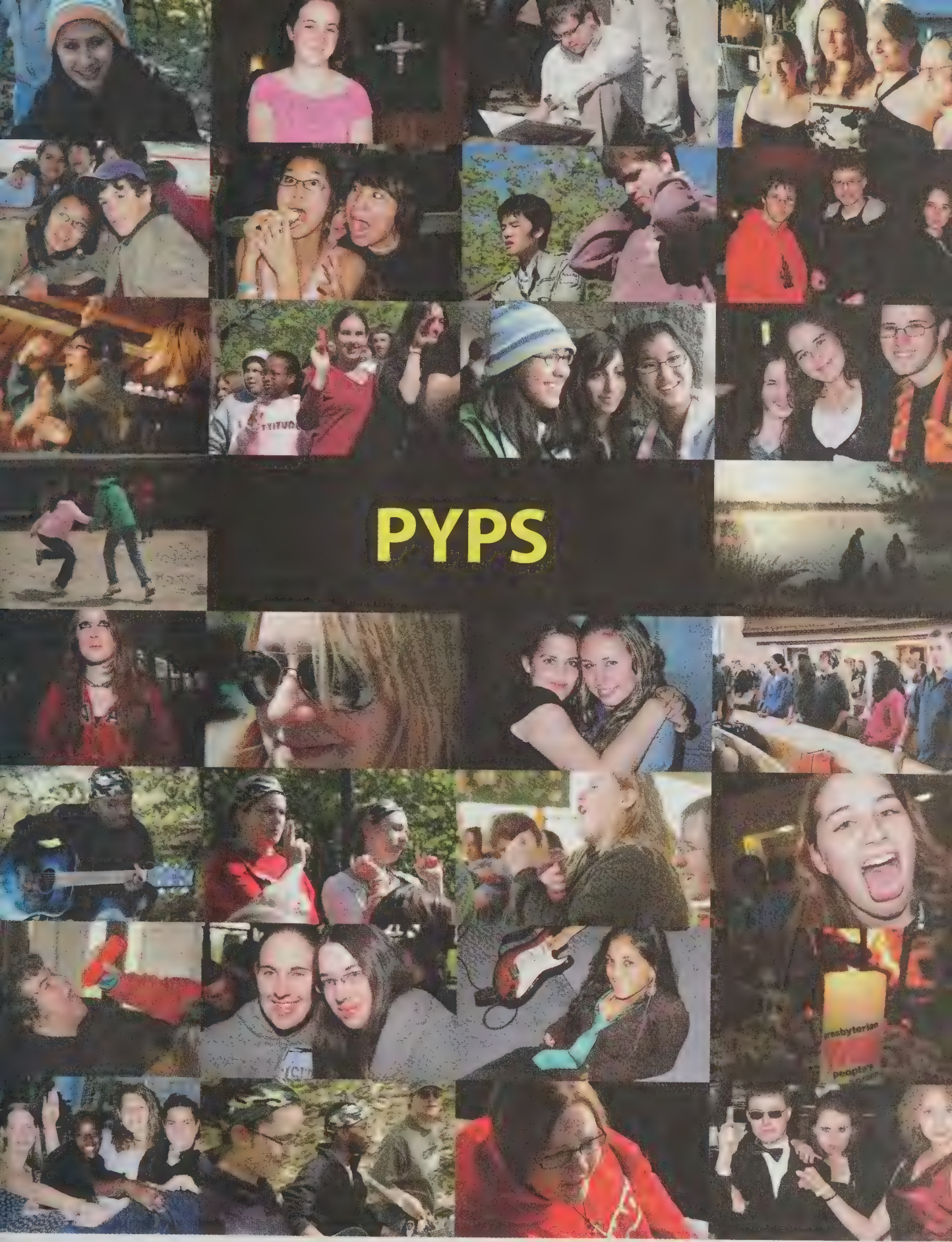
Michael Watt is a 19-year-old member of the CNOB PYPS from Glenview, Toronto. PYPS is open to ages 14-25.










PYPS

On Being Presby

Church Shopping

A journey to her Presbyterian self.

BY JENNIFER HIGGS

I grew up Presbyterian. My mom made sure my sister and I went to church every week, and participated in Sunday school and the junior choir. As I got older, I continued to attend St. Andrew's, Cobourg, Ont., and am an active churchgoer.

I've always been a little curious about things. As a teenager, I started to have more questions about my faith and the church. I would take books out of the library and ask my minister questions.

Around the same time, I went to Triennium with a friend from St. Andrew's. I was 18 and had never experienced such a strong (and young) religious community. In less than a week we had made Presbyterian friends from across North America and looked forward to worship while being challenged and strengthened in our faith.

A short year later I was off to university, living in residence with no friends from home. It was important to meet new people, but the crude language of frosh week cheers shocked me. My Wiccan roommate had some interesting ideas. My Christian values clashed with the new surroundings.

When I saw a sign on the residence door for a frosh Christian barbeque, I decided to go. Within a few minutes I'd met several other frosh who also wanted to meet Christian friends. There were several Christian groups on campus, including Campus Crusade for Christ, the Navigators, and Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship.

I started to go to one of the groups, but after a few meetings knew I was far from my comfort zone. My attendance wavered and soon was nonexistent. I went spirituality shopping. I attended a variety of different churches over the four years. From a conservative church with over 1,000 people to a new church plant that embraced modern culture and art, there was something unique at each.

It was important to meet new people, but the crude language of frosh week cheers shocked me

I became involved with the campus IVCF group. They encouraged me to grow in faith. I was even elected president for my final year. Later, I started to attend a Wesleyan church every Sunday. It was just a few blocks from campus with modern music and scripture presented on PowerPoint. But I knew I didn't completely jive with the church's style and doctrine, and missed the Presbyterian services from home.

I found St. Andrew's, Ottawa, a large and vibrant congregation minutes from my downtown apartment. It had a college and careers group and a minister willing to take my friend and I out for coffee. They had me at "good morning."

In June 2006, I attended the PCC's General Assembly as Lindsay-Peterborough's young adult representative. I was a little nervous; I would be spending a week at Brock University's residence with around 20 other YARs and a lot of ministers.

That week was probably the best experience of my life. Receiving a large green binder with a year's worth of reports and sitting in on conferences all day might not sound enthralling, but it was.

I knew the church had committees, but I certainly didn't realize how hip they could be. I was glued to the presentation by PWS&D about their international work and fight against AIDS. I thought about mission work in a new way when I heard what Moderator Wilma Welsh had to say. I felt like I was witnessing history when the assembly voted on sanctuary for refugees.

And, Presbyterians know how to have a good time. The YARs jammed in our common room and had great conversations. We presented a satirical view of GA during the last sederunt and received roaring laughter and applause from the audience.

After GA I started noticing other things I like about the denomination. I like looking at the Bible in its entirety and sometimes in metaphors. I think it's important a church can open its doors (and minds) to new ideas and culture. And I enjoy the stimulating sermons, research and doctrines Presbyterian ministers present every week.

When people ask me what church I go to, I don't hesitate in my answer. I am a proud Presbyterian. ■

Jennifer Higgs is a freelance journalist and member of St. Andrew's, Cobourg.

erian...

Prezbití ri: n

In search of a definition.

BY ERIN WOODS

What does it mean to be a Presbyterian? I've had that question in my head for a while now. A little over a year ago I researched a thesis for sociology class at school: Christian teens are less likely to engage in at-risk behaviour. It was an interesting project, and the presentation went well, but things always get a little harder when the teacher asks, "Does anyone have any questions for Erin?"

Of course they did. And the first one was "You're Pres – Presbyterian, right? How is that different from Christian?"

I replied that it wasn't, that it was simply a particular type of Christianity. I'm not sure if I did a good job of explaining it. It seems to be a concept that a lot of people have trouble grasping. My class managed to boil it down to "All Catholics are Christians, all Christians are not Catholics. All Presbyterians are Protestant and Christian, all Protestants are Christian but not all are Presbyterian." Fine. We could accept that. Then there were more questions: "What is it that makes Presbyterians different from other Protestants?"

"The truth is," I shrugged, "I don't know. They came from different reform leaders at different times, and they don't all agree on gay marriage. That's really the only thing I can figure out."

So my presentation turned out to be more of a lesson about denominations than an examination about high-risk behaviours. That was OK; I'd been prepared for that. Since our society has become so afraid of discussing Christianity, most kids my age are uninformed and curious. What I wasn't prepared for was the persistent question in my mind: How do you explain "Presbyterian"?

I tried to find out. I brought it up in a Bible study once. Everyone was very concerned that I should be educated. I now have my very own copy of the *Book of Forms*, innumerable pamphlets and four copies of *Living Faith*.

I asked my Dad. He grew up Anglican. I asked my Mom. She grew up United. And neither of them knew the Presbyterian Church's stand on gay marriage.

The only thing left to do was to invent a definition myself

I took the Leader in Training course at a Presbyterian camp. One of the counsellors asked me if I knew what Presbyterians believed.

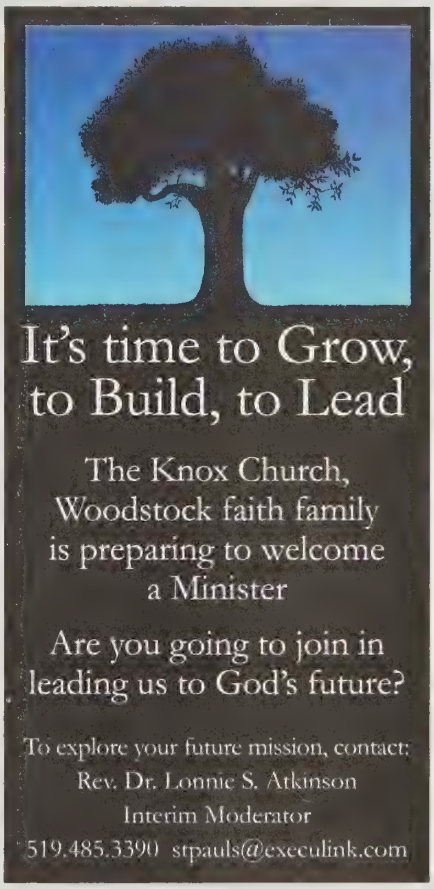
I thought about the Apostle's Creed. But other churches use that, too. And since it says, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church," I don't think it's about to help with my explanation.

The only thing left to do was to invent a definition myself. Not a *Book of Forms* definition, but something that a class of grade elevens could understand:

Pres by te ri an (prezbití ri: n),
someone who believes in God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit, who are both separate and the same (like the way ice, water and vapour are all H20), someone who belongs to a Protestant (i.e., Christian, but not Catholic), Presbyterian church which is governed by elders (presbyter means elder in Latin, I read that somewhere) and someone who, according to popular opinion, really enjoys music and food.

And if I'm wrong, will someone please, please correct me! ■

Erin Woods is a member of Calvin, North Bay, Ont., and the worship coordinator for CNOB PYPS.



RAYNER PRIZE

WINNING ENTRY

The Word of Love

This is what God has done in Jesus. BY MATTHEW RUTTAN

The complete U2 lyrics suggest that love for the world's shared humanity can unite all people even amidst great diversity. The Smiths' lyric has a different feel. But, it is not as drab as it first seems. Although there is despair, this is no teenage apathy or self-righteousness; it is love being sought in earnest, but never found. Lead singer Steven Morrissey cries out, "I need to be loved, just like everybody else does!"

These lyrics capture something of our age. But is it the struggle between communal hope and self-righteousness? I would argue that if we look at the entire lyrics we see that the common link is not a post-modern identity complex, but that they are both pleas for love in a world where love does not seem to prevail. U2 hopes for the reconciliation of the global community, and The Smiths hope for a reconciliation of two people. In both cases, there is a tension between what is and what could be. So through the seemingly opposite lenses of hope and despair we actually see two perspectives on a larger dilemma: unrequited love.

So what can assist the Church —that lives in this tension— to respond to the cries of unrequited love?

The Church has something in common with this dilemma, because it lives it. After all, as the body of Christ, the Church's existence compounds an excruciating tension: the perfect body of God's love and beauty, and at the same time, the bloody corpse of obedience and humiliation dangling on a cross. The Church captures this tension when it proclaims the ➤

THE RAYNER PRIZE

Rev. Dr. DeCourcey H. Rayner was a legendary fellow. A minister, he was also editor of the *Record*, and moderator of the 103rd General Assembly. It was in his capacity as editor I know him best: I occasionally pick up issues he produced, from the '60s, and read them cover-to-cover. He had a strong balance between tradition and the modern, between being a general interest religion magazine and a denominational newsletter. Some of those stories are as fresh as this morning's headlines.

So, when I was approached by Armour Heights, Toronto, to adjudicate a bursary they have in Rayner's name, I was honoured. The award "is designed to encourage students training for ministry in our denomination to strive for excellence in writing articles, from a Christian perspective, suitable for publication in magazines, newspapers, etc."

I was asked to choose the subject for an essay of no more than 500 words. The winning entrant, published here, will receive $500 from the bursary; the runner-up $250.

For the subject I chose a news article I had quoted in one of my columns last year. We had four submissions. All of them can be read on our website.

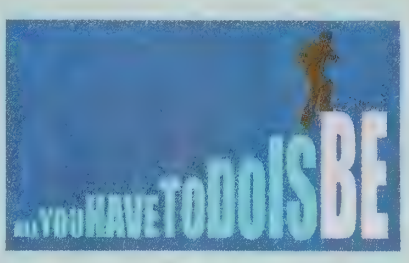
"The Irish band U2 has given Britain its favourite song lyric, according to a survey released by music channel VHI. The line 'one life, with each other, sisters, brothers' from the song One topped the poll. Runner-up was the downbeat, 'So you go and stand on your own, and you go home, and you cry, and you want to die.' From The Smiths' How Soon Is Now. AP story, *The Toronto Star*, April 17, 2006."

Needless to say, choosing a winner was difficult. All were smart and well written and I'd love to see them in future issues of the *Record*. But I had to make a decision. So I did—Matthew Ruttan, of Knox College. The runner-up is Heather Anderson, at Presbyterian College, Montreal.

As for future entrants in the Rayner bursary, I offer two small pieces of advice: read carefully the terms of the contest, and a magazine article is not a verbal sermon, though it's hard to tell the difference at times. *–Andrew Faiz*

abundant peace made known in Christ even amidst the poverty and suffering that moan all over the earth. The reconciliation between what is and what could be seems a mirage. But as Christians we know that God is working towards humanity's common union. So what can assist the Church—that lives in this tension—to respond to the cries of unrequited love?

I don't pretend to suggest something new or revolutionary—just a reiteration of what lies at the heart of our faith: Jesus on the cross. God's response to the distance between God and us, and between us and each other, is the cross. This must perpetually remain tattooed on our hearts. When the cross falls from ➤



Jesus said, *"I have come so that people might experience life to the full."* With insight and encouragement, author **Tom Caldwell** presents a refreshing, renewing guide to daily living that directs us to the truly fulfilled personhood we seek. Why plug along from day to day in a pedestrian rut of mediocrity, ineffectiveness and futility? Become the person God wants you to be and the person you want yourself to be. Accept this invitation to find a life of freshness, meaning and grace.

Whether read alone, or as a study guide with a group of fellow seekers, this book offers rich resources for spiritual growth.

Tom Caldwell has worked in a number of settings, in each of which he has related closely and meaningfully with persons in all walks of life. He has been a human relations manager in industry, a high school English teacher, and, primarily, a minister in both New York State and Canada. He holds degrees from the State University of New York at Oswego, McMaster University in Hamilton, and St. Paul University, Ottawa. He now lives in Brantford, Ontario, where he holds the title of Honorary Minister at the historic First Baptist Church.

Available on amazon.ca or visit the author's website:
www.tomcaldwell.net

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LAY EDUCATION COURSE – Fall 2007



The Presbyterian College, Montreal

In Search of the Star of Bethlehem
Saturdays, October 27 & November 3, 2007
Instructor: Dr. Michael Pettem
Time: 9:00AM - 4:00PM

Ministry Today: Problems & Prospects
Saturday, November 17, 2007
Instructor: Rev. Dr. Richard Topping
Time: 9:00AM - 4:00PM

FOR COURSE INFORMATION OR DIPLOMA PROGRAM IN LAY LEADERSHIP CONTACT SHULING CHEN,
LAY EDUCATION COORDINATOR Tel: (514) 288-5256 ext. 206 layeducation@presbyteriancollege.ca

A church that points to Jesus on the cross looks honestly at the world and knows the very real pain of division and loneliness

view, we have ceased to proclaim the Gospel, and risk reducing Christianity to morality or good citizenship. When the cross falls from view, we risk forgetting that it is God who is at work in Christ in ways that often lie beyond our comprehension. When the cross falls from view, we risk divorcing resurrection from servanthood and the horrific pain in this life. The cross is God's embrace, and therefore, it becomes the arms of the Church that extend to others looking for love—arms that are wounded yet strong, pained yet loving, crucified yet resurrected.

A church that points to Jesus on the cross looks honestly at the world and knows the very real pain of division and loneliness that enclave the hearts of so many. And yet, it is charged by Jesus to see God's face of love—not in cute little angels with wings—but in the deep shadows and struggles of human hearts. The cross is not easy. It is not a quick fix prescription for instant relief. It is resisted in a world that so desperately yearns for black and white answers to the greyness of a complex society. It is resisted because it rejects success and happiness as the sure and exclusive signs of God's presence.

Unrequited love is not naïve; and so, if it is to be met in earnest and with the power to unite, the word of response from the Church must be able to do the heavy lifting over the long haul. This is what God has done in Jesus. The Word hanging on the cross is Love. ■

Matthew Ruttan is a student at Knox College, Toronto.

All Rayner entries can be read on the *Record's* website.

Presbyterian students who are interested in entering next year's contest should contact their respective colleges for more information.

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Rev. Ian Fraser and St. Columba's youngest elder, Neil George.

Good Deeds Done Dutifully

One teen's infectious passion makes all the difference. BY CHERYL DOXAS

Neil George is a remarkable young man. At the age of 16, this Honour Roll student who recently graduated from Lindsay Place High School, Pointe-Claire, Que., has already proven that one person, who is determined and passionate, can have an impact on the world. In addition to his love of snowboarding, golf and baseball, he spends a lot of time raising money. Two years ago, Neil's passionate journey was launched into high gear as an apt extension of participation in his home congregation's (St. Columba by-the-Lake, Montreal) mentoring program, which paired an adult from the congregation with one of our six teens preparing to join the church. A few group get-togethers were interspersed with outings organized by each dyad. As discussions based on the Gospel of Luke led to casual outings or coffees at Chapters, mentors and teens alike experienced an awareness of not only the challenges faced by different generations, but the shared awareness of the spiritual paths each are traveling. The experience culminated with a weekend retreat at Mount Tremblant, where meals, hikes, and worship led to discussions linked to spirituality and what it means to join the church.

Neil became the youngest elder in the history of St. Columba

Following his participation in the program, Neil became the youngest elder in the history of St. Columba. The session, and the congregation as a whole, was seeking to be inclusive and to engage our youth in interesting and challenging ways, and Neil fit the vision to a "T." As is his fashion, Neil adds a new dimension to the session. He asks questions that many elders would not, and his ability to challenge the adults' way of doing things is a breath of fresh air.

Two years ago, Neil was inspired by the words of Rev. Ian Fraser, who had travelled to Malawi with a delegation from national offices. His slide show and talks highlighted the immense problems faced by Africans suffering from HIV/AIDS. Also, Neil and his mother Doreen attended a speech by Steven Lewis where the audience was challenged to give help—now. This prompted Neil to report that he "didn't understand why people weren't helping." Neil saw the "desperate need in the people's faces." He felt that he could do something to make a difference. Neil speaks of his personal journey as he relates to God. Therefore, the comfortable and familiar surroundings of St. Columba seemed the place to start. With Fraser's encouragement, Neil began to draw up the plans necessary to raise more than an astounding $10,000 for the ➤

CANADIAN SOCIETY OF PRESBYTERIAN HISTORY

ANNUAL MEETING

Knox College, 59 St George Street, Toronto
29 September, 2007 - 10:00 a.m.

"Hugh Graham and James MacGregor: What Formed These Heralds Of The Early Church?"
The Hon. John Gammell, Midland, Ontario, retired Justice of the Ontario Court of Justice - Family Division.

"'The Dominie': Herbert S. Mekeel, his Clergy Conscripts and their impact on The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1935 - 1979"
A. Donald MacLeod, Research Professor of Church History, Tyndale Theological Seminary

"Severing A Pastoral Tie: Ian Burnett, St. Andrew's Ottawa, and the 1960 General Assembly"
John Moir, Professor Emeritus, University of Toronto

"The Communion Token: Church Discipline and Church Growth."
Angus Sutherland, Doon Presbyterian Church, Convener of the Committee on History

Membership dues, $20.00, lunch, $5.00
Preregister with Secretary-Treasurer
Michael Millar at mmillar@apexia.ca

Towards a World Without AIDS campaign of Presbyterian World Service and Development. More specifically, St. Columba has been supporting TOTS, an AIDS prevention program run by Dr. Rick Allen for the Presbyterian Church of East Africa in Kenya.

First on his agenda was a Mums for Moms in Malawi. St. Columbans bought potted mums which were displayed in the sanctuary. Then at the end of the service, the purchasers took them home. Each mum contained a message providing more information about the TOTS program. The profit of more than $600 served to launch his zealous plan. Next a car wash was held at St. Columba. Several youths and Neil's dad, Dave, washed over 20 cars and raised a few more hundred dollars. A harvest dinner furthered this good start. Other teens from Neil's mentoring class joined him and Catherine Notley to cook and serve seven turkeys, loads of mashed potatoes, gravy, lots of vegetables and homemade pies. At this event more than $1,200 was raised. Encouraged by this success, Neil worked out a deal with a local nightclub, that he and his friends would get professional talent to donate their time, and Neil would guarantee the crowd. Monies from ticket sales would go to the fund. The evening was a huge success, as not only did the 200-plus crowd have fun enjoying the talents of Guffman Five and Dawn Tyler Watson, but the ticket sales added another $6,500 to the cause.

His ideas abound: fashion shows, golf tournaments, more dinners and car washes. The sky is the limit for this teen

The spring of 2007 brought with it another Mums for Moms campaign. The beautiful flowers helped to remind the congregation of the continuing plight of those in the throes of AIDS. Neil's ideas abound: fashion shows, golf tournaments, more dinners and car washes. The sky is the limit for this teen.

Neil has graduated from high school and now heads off to Dawson College to study social science and math. He plans to pursue his interests in cooking and business and looks forward to a future where his passionate response to the greater need of others continues. His desire is to visit Africa, to witness the situations, see what good is being done, and in true "Neil fashion" discover how he can help and play a role in easing the suffering of others.

We need to celebrate the good deeds of our teenagers; not so hard to do when Neil George is in charge of the plan! ■

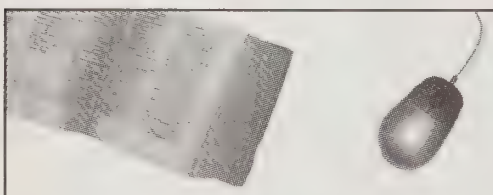
Cheryl Doxas is an elder at St. Columba, Montreal.

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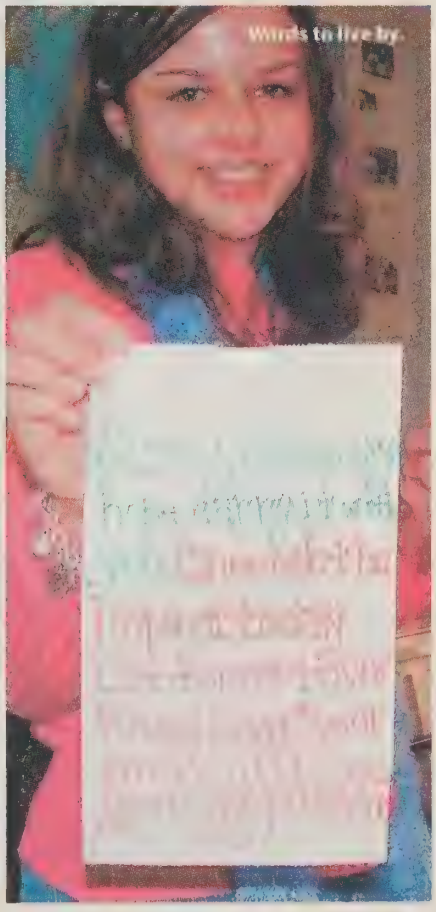
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Two Presbyterians get ready to clean a local shelter in London, Ont.

A Day of Wonder



Words to live by.

50 pre-highschoolers, 20 volunteer leaders, 30 rolls of duct tape. BY MAVIS CURRIE

Put more than 50 Grade 6-8 youth in one Presbyterian church, add 30 rolls of duct tape, 20 dedicated leaders and some cool craft supplies. Spend the next 11 hours participating in community-building recreation, meaningful worship, amazing "in our own city" mission projects and just plain fun. The result? One Day Wonder—a junior youth event organized by youth leaders within the Presbytery of London and held in February.

Spurred on by the experience at Canada Youth 2006 and the knowledge that the wider church offers little for pre-highschool youth, the youth and young adult committee within presbytery began planning a one-day event.

Chalmers, London, agreed to host the conference. More than a dozen churches within the presbytery supplied leadership, supplies or meals in order to make the event a success. Our theme was Psalm 8—a Psalm that sings of how amazing our Creator is and of how we are miraculously called to be partners with ➤

God in creation. The day included holy motion and community building as well as recreational workshops like road hockey, duct tape wallet making, beading, line dancing, and board games.

Mid-way through the day, all of our youth boarded buses to engage in meaningful mission projects throughout the city. We put together boxes of food at the food bank, cleaned a local shelter and made treats and crafts for children. Our day culminated with worship in the sanctuary of Chalmers, led by Scott McAllister and Reuben St. Louis.

One Day Wonder was a day for new friendships. It was a day of clergy and lay people working together in youth ministry. It was a day of adults and senior youth mentoring preteens in the faith. It was a day filled with exuberance and energy. It was a day where we took our role as partners in creation seriously—engaging in mission and ensuring we did not create any unnecessary garbage or waste. It was a day when rural and city churches were equal partners. It was a day of worship, of retreat, of fun and silliness. It was one day of wonder. ■

Rev. Mavis Currie is minister to youth and young families at Westmount, London, Ont. She is also the convener of the youth ministry committee for the Presbytery of London.



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ian.morrison@sympatico.ca



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"The Changing Face of International Mission:
Critical Questions for Today"
with panelists
Rick Fee, Sarah Kim, Barbara Nawratil, Laura Smith & Ron Wallace

SEPTEMBER 26 1:30 - 4:30 p.m.

The Chris Vais Memorial Lectureship

"Faith and Finitude"
The Rev. Dr. Cameron Brett

OCTOBER 20 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Continuing Education Event

"A View from the Pew"
The Rev. Dr. Cameron Brett
This event has a $25.00 registration fee

OCTOBER 22 1:30 - 4:30 p.m.

The 2007 Laidlaw Lectures

"Pastoral Care and Counselling: Redefining the Paradigms"
Carrie Doehring, Assoc. Prof. Pastoral Care and Counselling
Iliff School of Theology, Denver, Colorado

NOVEMBER 7 2:30 & 7:00 p.m.
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A Focus on Sharing

Be real, show your thoughts, feelings and questions. BY KATIE MUNNIK

You could say that I've worked in youth ministry for over a decade. That's not entirely accurate, though. A decade ago, I was a youth. Yes, I was involved in youth ministry, but it was more about being involved with the church and hanging out with people my own age. Today, I work for the church, still spending a lot of my time with young people. I'm not sure that makes me a professional. But development is a good thing, so when I had the opportunity to attend the Princeton Forum on Youth Ministry at the beginning of May, I jumped at it.

I registered for an extended seminar on relational/incarnational ministry with Andrew Root, an assistant professor of youth and family ministry at Luther Seminary, Minnesota. Root's main thesis was that if those involved in youth ministry focus on influencing the behaviour of youth, they will miss the chance for a deeper social and theological connection. It's an easy trap to fall into. You like youth, and you want to show them the worth of living a Christian life. But who wants to hang out with someone who is always telling them what to do?

Why do I do ministry the way I do it?

This struck a chord with me. What is my focus? It's a question I don't find time to ask when I'm worrying about programs and phone calls and how many kids are going to show up this time. At Princeton, I found time to step outside the details of my work and to think about it more deeply. Why do I do ministry the way I do it?

There is a story that I've used many times while working with youth. I used it to explain the incarnation (as if that could be explained so easily), but I think that it can shed light on the question of focus in ministry. It goes like this: One night, a farmer looks out his window and sees some sparrows huddled together in the yard. It's cold outside. Depending on who's telling the story, it may even be Christmas Eve. The birds are looking fairly miserable, as the cold wind swirls around them, ruffling their feathers. The man thinks that they would be much warmer in the barn, so he puts on his coat, goes outside and opens the barn door. The birds don't get the idea, so he tries to round them up, chasing them towards the barn, flapping his arms. It doesn't work. He yells at the birds, hoping to scare them into the barn. They scatter into the shadows. If only, he thinks, if only I could become a bird, I could show them how to go into the barn, and they would be warm and safe tonight. And if the storyteller is going for poignant, she'll have the village church bell strike midnight at that moment as the farmer realizes that this is why Christ came into the world. If only I could become a bird.

It's a sweet story, but also a prob-

lematic one if we use it to give shape to ministry. The farmer, like Christ, like a youth minister, points the way of salvation; but in the story, it's implied that Christ assumed humanity like a costume so that he could lead us to safety. In youth ministry, we sometimes mirror this kind of costumed Christ. We want to influence youth—in a good way, of course—so we assume the look of youth, with its new music and movies and high-tech gear. This costume admits us to youth culture so that we can lead the youth out of the cold of troubled adolescence and into the warm barn of the church. But Jesus' humanity wasn't a costume. It ran deeper than that, because Jesus shared our humanity. This is important. In Jesus, God became as vulnerable as we are—vulnerable to shame, to insult, to pain and to death—and he shared that vulnerability with us. It is only through his sharing of vulnerability that the cross makes any sense. If Jesus wasn't vulnerable, he didn't suffer and didn't confront through his suffering the suffering of the world. But, thank heavens, he did.

All ministry, be it youth ministry or aged ministry, camping ministry or urban ministry, should be focused on this sharing. Jesus shared and redeemed our humanity that we might share and redeem all humanity as his ambassadors. That includes our own. It means being real with each other, open to show our thoughts, feelings and questions. Always giving youth answers is like asking them to grow out of their humanity. Perhaps we should all try to grow into our humanity instead. ■

Katie Munnik is director of youth worship for the Presbytery of Ottawa.

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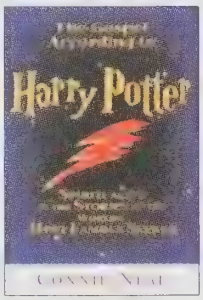


Using Harry to Get to Christ

Muggles know the story of that Potter kid better than the story of Jesus.

BY REBEKAH MITCHELL





The Hour of the Witch
By Steve Wohlberg; *Destiny Image*

The Gospel According to Harry Potter
By Connie Neal; *Westminster John Knox Press*

It has often been said that there are two sides to every story. Within Christianity, there are diametrically opposed views when it comes to many issues today. Pick any hot topic—from the style of music we ought to use in worship to euthanasia to *The Da Vinci Code*—and you will find Christians passionately committed to opposite views. So why should it be any different when it comes to J.K. Rowling's boy wizard, Harry Potter?

The remarkably successful series of children's novels—now being made into movies as fast as Hollywood can crank them out—has long been debated among Christians. Two recently published books demonstrate this point. *The Hour of the Witch* contends that the series is inherently wicked, leading young readers away from Christ and into a fascination with witchcraft. Wohlberg condemns the books on nearly every point. He equates their success to a cult following (and he does not mean this in the colloquial sense of a harmless but avid popularity), denounces the humour in the books as in bad taste, argues that the darker parts in the stories are responsible for nightmares and criticizes Rowling's characters for occasionally using an off-colour word. He appears to believe that young readers should be reading their Bibles instead of Harry Potter novels.

On the other hand, *The Gospel According To Harry Potter* takes a more positive approach to the novels. Neal uses scenes from the first four books of the series as points of departure for spiritual teaching. In her approach, Headmaster Dumbledore is seen as a God-like figure, the letters that invite Harry to Hogwarts are related to the invitation God extends to humanity to live in relationship with Him, and platform 9 ¾ becomes a lesson on the necessity of faith.

Neal makes the point in her introduction that people will find what they want to find in the Harry Potter series. That seems to be the very point that Wohlberg completely misses.

I have to admit I tend to lean towards Neal's way of understanding

Harry Potter. I have long wondered why some enterprising Christian writer has not taken the story as a whole and applied a Christian reading to it. While Neal does an admirable job with small snippets of the first four books, I long to read what someone might write about the entire series as a loose allegory. It may be that such an enterprise will soon be attempted, now that the final book has been published.

Nonetheless, I have found myself reading the series with the theory that Harry represents Christ (not that he is Christ, but that he represents Christ), that Dumbledore represents God, and that magic represents the Holy Spirit. The wizarding world represents Christianity, and the Muggle world represents those who do not know about Jesus Christ. Voldemort is so plainly Satan that it is laughable to think of him as anything else.

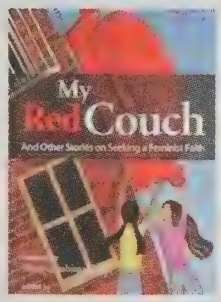
The wizarding world represents Christianity, and the Muggle world represents those who do not know about Jesus Christ

At the very least, this type of reading brings me to a basic point as a Christian: I believe that the Holy Scriptures should inform how we read everything else we encounter. I agree with Neal that "glimmers of the gospel" are sprinkled throughout secular novels, songs, films and TV series. These glimmers are gifts to any who are seeking creative ways in which to communicate the Gospel to a world which knows the story of Harry Potter much better than that of Jesus Christ. ■

Rebekah Mitchell is the minister at St. Luke's, Oshawa, Ont.

Labouring in Faith and Hope

On being a Christian and a feminist. BY FAIRLIE RITCHIE



My Red Couch, and Other Stories on Seeking a Feminist Faith
Edited by Claire Bischoff and Rachel Gaffron
The Pilgrim Press

This title on the bookshelf was a magnet to my hand. I'm glad it was.

The World Council of Churches' 1994 Re-Imagining Conference spawned a movement, but Claire Bischoff and Rachel Gaffron became conscious of the absence of young women's voices there. They therefore conceived this book.

Their feminism "is based on a core belief that women and men were created in the image of God ... [and is] a wholistic category that influences all life, including religion." By "faith" they mean "reliance on or trust in a transcendent being or power," something that is "about where our heart is, what gives our life meaning, and what impels us to action."

The writers, 21-35 years old, represent almost a dozen denominations, including Baptist, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic, as well as some who no longer associate with a traditional faith community.

One is an English professor whose church decided not to hire a female minister. She tells the story of a woman who rejected church and faith when her studies opened her up to the concept of patriarchalism. She speaks of how she struggles with how she feels in her heart and finds herself in joy on Jesus' lap when she prays.

Another finds the idea of God as Mother intuitively right, but has more problems with herself as mother and the surrender it involves. And another explores the complexity of being a middle-class Korean-Canadian feminist Christian in a multicultural democracy where she still experiences marginalization as a Korean woman. She follows the Jesus who came for the marginalized, and embraces her multiple identities to share with all.

And, of course, there is Sara Irwin's My Red Couch, an Episcopal priest's hilarious account of hiring a mover to hoist a fluffy red couch to her apartment. When the mover found out what Irwin did for a living, he poured out his personal religious story as if he'd been waiting for years. "None of us can be ourselves alone," she writes. "As feminists or Christians or Jews or lawyers, we are all ourselves in relation to one another ... We are inscribed in larger and larger contexts, ultimately in God ... When I stifle my truth as a feminist in church, I'm betraying other feminists ... We can only labour in faith and hope for God's promise of justice and peace."

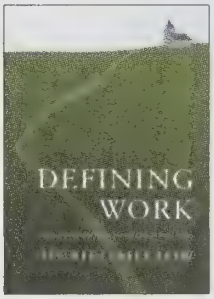
Amidst the diverse dilemmas of these young women, two themes are constant. One is how deeply they love their faith tradition; the other, how deeply they mourn narrow patriarchal handcuffs. Their pain is so great because their love is so great.

The editors close their introduction by noting: "Storytelling is both an empowering and educational activity. By sharing our stories, we validate our experience [and] give witness to personal truths." ■

Rev. Fairlie Ritchie is a spiritual director and is working on her Ph.D in Theology.

The Ambiguities of Rural Ministry

A well written book rewards with insights. BY PETER BUSH



Defining Work: Gender, Professional Work, and the Case of Rural Clergy
by Muriel Mellow
McGill-Queen's University Press

"Location, location, location" matters not only in business; it also impacts how ministry is done. Muriel Mellow, assistant professor of sociology at the University of Lethbridge, has listened closely to her informants, for she accurately describes the ambiguities confronting rural clergy.

Is attending a community event ministry (work) or not? Recently the Mitchell Hawks, our local Junior "D" hockey team, made it to the league finals. Our family decided to take the 90-minute road trip to see game two of the series. At the second intermission I was getting hot chocolate when a man from Mitchell said to me, "It was good of you to come all this way to support the team." No longer was being at the game something the Bushes were doing for fun, I had a role, a function. I was not just a fan, I was "the minister."

Where are the boundaries between private and public life, between family and community? For some rural clergy the minister's study is in the manse; more ministry happens in the family's home than does in the church building. The family and the private are incorporated into the work of ministry.

What does it mean to keep professional distance, when the people I curl with are also the people who sit around the session table with me? Rural clergy are professional advisors and neighbours. They are people paid for services rendered and a friend to talk to while waiting for children to get out of school.

Mellow, married to a United Church of Canada minister, interviewed 40 United Church rural clergy for her study seeking to elucidate the connection between work and rurality, in particular how female and male clergy conceptualized their work. The subjects were equally divided, women and men, and were clustered in various parts of the country. She claims she found no significant regional differences.

Rural clergy challenge a number of stereotypes. First, rural clergy, women and men, blur the line between public and private life, making "work in the private domain visible." Mellow argues rural clergy do not follow masculine patterns of work that demarcate private and public, but rather use feminine patterns of work in which private and public are indistinguishable. Second, rural clergy challenge the lines between professional work and volunteer work. They are paid to work alongside volunteers often doing the same tasks: think for example of presbytery and session meetings or congregational suppers. Further, clergy are paid so that they might volunteer in the community. Third, rural clergy help reveal the limitations of professional definitions of ministry, opening up the possibility of finding more helpful ways of conceptualizing ministry.

Exceptionally well written, it provides lots of opportunity for conversation and will reward readers with glittering insights. ■

Rev. Peter Bush is a teaching elder at Knox, Mitchell, Ont.

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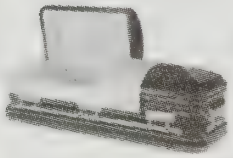
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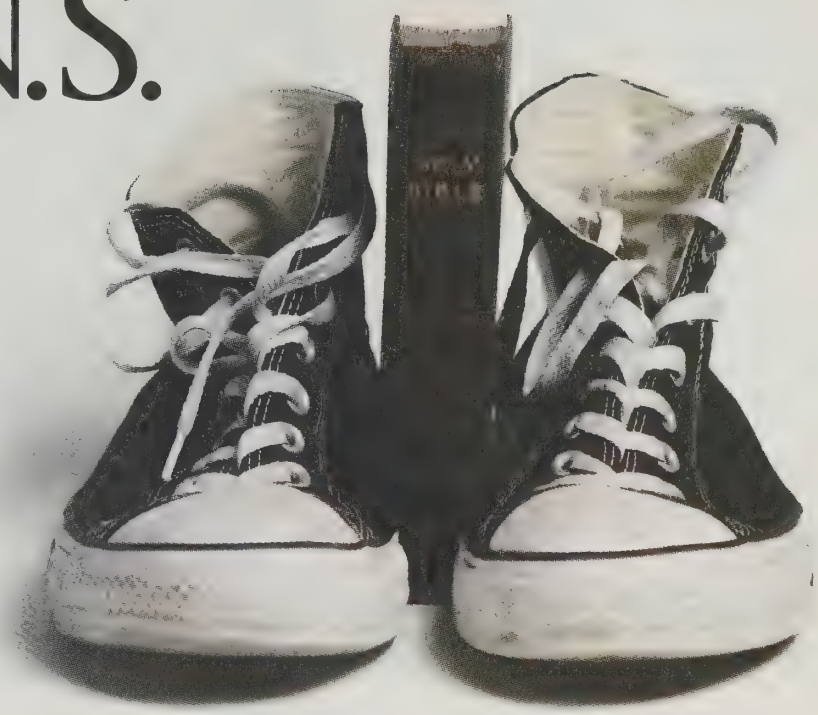
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Five ways to survive being a SITCOM family. BY PHIL CALLAWAY



Someone asked me recently what I do. I said, "I follow teenagers around the house. I shut lights off. It's a full-time job."

We are a SITCOM family: Single Income Teenage Children Outa Money. Squinty-eyed prophets of doom programmed us to believe that when teenagers arrived I would lose my sense of humour, my dignity, my wallet, and my hair. They were right about the first two. Oh sure, we've had our moments of fear and uncertainty. We've shed some tears, bought some headache pills and lost some sleep. But five keys have kept us thriving at a time when so many are just surviving. Here they are:

Try laughter. Life can be deadly serious for a teenager. The teenage years are roller coaster years. Teens are wondering whose rules to respect, whose lifestyle to adopt, and who on earth kidnapped their body and began doing experiments on it. And so they need the stability of a home where laughter is never far away. Wholesome laughter is a testimony to our children that it's gonna be okay. That God is big enough to see us through the next exam, the next relational hiccup, and the next bout with acne.

Exercise flexibility. Chuck Swindoll once wrote, "When it comes to rearing teenagers, rigidity is lethal. Parents who refuse to flex, who insist on everything remaining exactly as it was in earlier years can expect their kids to rebel." We figure if our kids are gonna party, we'd like it to happen about 20 feet away. The music may be annoying, but we're getting to the age where we can't hear it anyway.

Encourage vulnerability. Teens can smell a fake a mile away. Their baloney detector is set on high. So be real. Say you're sorry. Make sure they know you were a teenager once; even if was before the invention of electricity. Your kids aren't expecting you to be cool. They don't expect you to know who Brad Pitt's latest wife is. They need you to be real.

Life can be deadly serious for a teenager. The teenage years are roller coaster years

Nurture through affirmation. My teenagers have doubted my sanity at times, but never my love for them. They know there is no hour of the day or night during which they are forbidden to flop on my bed and tell me of their problems. I may keep sleeping, but at least they can talk. Yes, there are times I'd rather lecture than listen. I'd rather watch The Amazing Race than take them out for a mediocre milkshake. But in a kick-in-the-pants world, our teens are starving for a pat on the back, a listening ear and the magic words, "Waytago! Youdabest!"

Stay connected. Do whatever it takes to keep the lines of communication open. We're not an extravagant bunch. But through the years we have dropped almost everything at the first sign of a possible family vacation. After our family had travelled together across an ocean (thanks to Uncle Airmiles), someone squinted at me and asked, "You took your kids?" You bet we did. I have yet to meet someone in a nursing home who ever regretted such an investment.

Those who are wise enough to allow their teens room to breathe, who listen more than lecture, who remain calm when screaming seems a vastly better option, will find that the teenage years are invigorating, adventuresome, and if you're not careful, even rewarding.

And for those who are afraid of seeing the teenage years come to an end, don't worry. There isn't a teenager I know who hasn't gone out into the brave new world without eventually returning home starved. And carrying a bundle of dirty laundry. ■

Phil Callaway is an author and popular speaker. Visit him at www.laughagain.org



Rainbows Revisited?

God shall supply all our needs according to His riches in glory. BY DAVID WEBBER

"Do ya think there is any gold at the end of that rainbow, Dad?" Chelsea was smirking as she leaned over the back of the front seat of the pickup and pointed across the lake.

"Yep, there's always gold at the end of a rainbow," I said. "Twenty thousand green Irish leprechauns don't lie. The only problem is that the end of that rainbow over there is a powerful long ways off. I just know if we stopped the truck, unloaded the boat and roared over there to fetch the gold, just as soon as we got close, those darn leprechauns would move the end of the rainbow. Ya just can't trust guys in green tights."

I chuckled at my own ingenious story. But there was some truth to it. As far as I knew, the physics of refracted light dictated that it was impossible for a person to stand right over the end of a rainbow and still have the rainbow fixed in sight. "Looks like we get to see yet another one of your cock-eyed stories tested and proved wrong," said Linda.

Sure enough as we roared down the road beside Lac la Hache, the rainbow began to move in front of us. Soon instead of seeing just one end of the rainbow we could see both ends and everything in between. It began to shrink in size and it became as brilliant as if it was painted in acrylics. As we hurtled down the road, one end of the rainbow was resting on the lake about a hundred yards to the right of our truck and the other end was about the same distance in a farmer's hay field to the left. The whole rainbow affair was moving in front of us, or at least with us. And then as the road and the lake took a sharp turn to the right, lo and behold we drove right over the end of the rainbow, or at least right through it.

"Ha! You are so wrong!" Chelsea spoke with the satisfaction only a 14-year-old can muster on the occasion of a parent being caught flatfooted and erroneous. Surprisingly, I had no retort. The Spirit of God was already dealing with me, goading me in whatever part of my being that my stories come out of.

What the Spirit began to goad me with was a question. What if it was that simple? What if there really was gold at the end of a rainbow, or money growing on trees, or geese that laid golden eggs, or 54-million-dollar lotteries that you actually had a reasonable chance to win? This autumn, as often happens with the Cariboo ministry, we are financially strapped. Our income is down at every level. As usual, it is keeping me awake at nights. In the long sleepless nights I

often fantasize about money growing on trees or collecting at the end of rainbows and such. It sure would make doing mission work for Christ a lot easier. It sure would make my life a lot easier.

But it has never been that way. Just as soon as God calls his people to engage in a mission for him, it seems the resources bucket shows up with a hole in it. Oddly, when I read my Bible, that's always the exciting part. It's the part where God gives the tree, shows up with a ram, blows in with manna and quail, points out five smooth stones. I love those parts of the Bible stories ... those parts where God whips in and provides for his servants just at the last moment.

Or is it at just the right moment? When I first became a Christian, the story in the Bible of Abraham marching up the mountain to sacrifice his son Isaac was my least favourite story. As a father of a couple of young sons at the time of my conversion, I just couldn't get my head around the thing. Over the years of my faith, it has become one of my favourite Bible stories. Abraham is asked by God to do what all other gods of the land and of the day demanded to assure prosperity; i.e. give up your first born son in a rite of human sacrifice. When God showed up with a ram for Abraham, at first reading of the story it seems a "last moment" kind of thing (Gen. 22:14). But when I read it more carefully, it is clear that it is a "right moment" kind of thing. It is through the experience of running out of provision and having to absolutely depend on God, that Abraham comes to know God as not only expressly different from all other gods, but as "the Lord will provide." This revealing of God is so important in the story that Abraham memorializes the teaching by naming the mountain Yahweh yir'eh—the Lord provides (Gen. 22:8, 14). The interesting thing is, the phrase in the story usually translated "the Lord will provide" can also be literally translated as the "Lord will see" and later the "Lord will be seen." Through meeting a need when Abraham was at the end of himself and all other provision, at just the "right time," God is revealed to Abraham so profoundly that it is as if he is visible. WOW! I'll take that over pots of gold and lottery wins every time.

God revealed through providing. I've never thought about it very much but my experience with luck, as in pots of gold at the end of rainbows or pots of money at the end of lotteries and such, has never been very good. My experience with God providing, usually at just the right moment, has been profound. I don't believe in luck. I believe in God and His providence. Calvin Brown, the Presbyterian minister who baptized me when I was 30 taught me that. Like him, I won't even allow for potluck dinners ... we call them pot-providence dinners. I even go one further, every time God provides, he is revealed. Remember that, the next time you have a pot-providence dinner or celebrate the Lord's Table and you will be richly blessed.

In the mid seventies, Merla Watson wrote a praise song celebrating the Abrahamic concept of "God Will Provide." At the time it was titled "Jehovah-Jireh." In our congregation we sing it using the more biblically correct transliteration, Yahweh-Yir'eh.

JEHOVAH-JIREH [YAHWEH-YIR'EH]
by Merla Watson
Jehovah Jireh [Yahweh Yir'eh],
my Provider,
His grace is sufficient for me,
for me, for me;
Jehovah Jireh [Yahweh Yir'eh],
my Provider,
His grace is sufficient for me.

My God shall supply all my needs
according to His riches in glory;
He will give His angels charge
over me,
Jehovah Jireh [Yahweh Yir'eh]
cares for me, for me, for me,
Jehovah Jireh [Yahweh Yir'eh]
cares for me.

1974 Gordon V. Thompson Music C.C.L.I. #710966 ■

Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the Record. *He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C. house church ministry. His most recent book is* Like a Winter's Aspen: Embracing the Creator's Fire.

KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
WEYBURN, SASKATCHEWAN

We are a dynamic church with a desire for growth and change. We have identified the following areas as important to us:

- Dynamic preaching and worship.
- Youth ministry.
- Implementation of a music ministry.
- Equipping of members in small groups.
- Evangelism and community outreach.

If you feel that God is calling You as our next minister to lead us in these areas, please contact our Interim-Moderator:

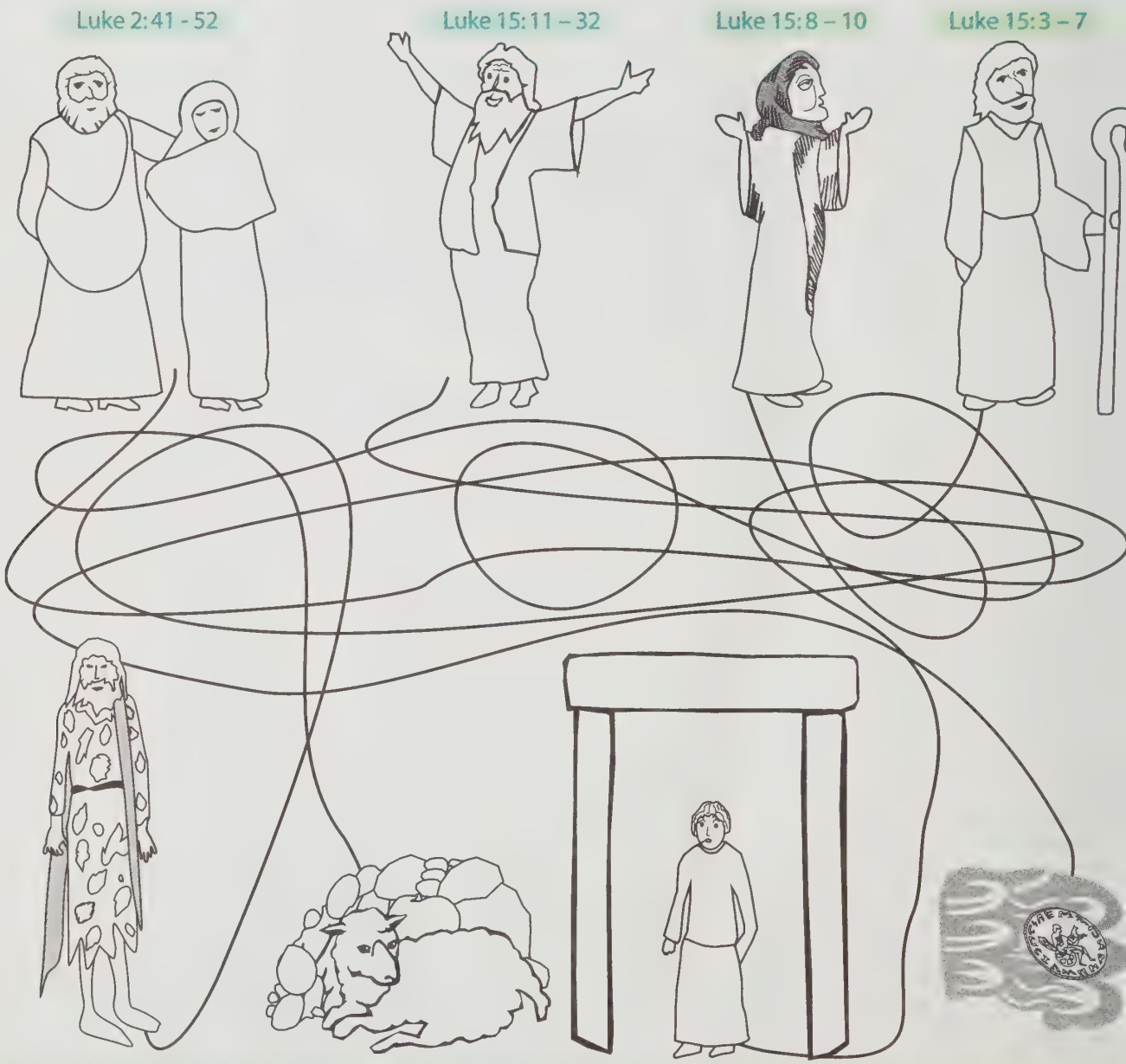
Rev. Jonathan Kwon
Tel: 306-697-2612 • E-mail: joyktw@hotmail.com



Called to Wonder

The Lost and the Found

Help the people in the top row find what they are looking for.
Then read each LOST AND FOUND Bible story. CREATED BY JENNIFER O'FARRELL



Jesus said, "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost." (Luke 19:10, NIV)

To report a vacancy for the next issue of the Record please contact Deborah Leader
Tel: 1-800-619-7301 x308 Fax: 416-441-2823 E-mail: dleader@presbyterian.ca

All notices of pulpit vacancies will be charged to the congregation: $40 minimum for one-time insertion or $25 per insertion for four or more. This charge applies to all congregations. Contact the Record office regarding items for this column.

Ministry Opportunities and Interim Moderators

Synod of the Atlantic Provinces

Bass River, N.B., Bass River Pastoral Charge; Rev. Kent Burdett, 101 Dutch Point Rd., Hampton, NB E5N 5Z2; 506-832-4985; kburdett@nbnet.nb.ca.

Halifax, N.S.; Knox Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. D. Laurence Mawhinney, PO Box 1972, Lunenburg, NS B0J 2C0; 902-634-4410 (office); 902-634-9212 (home); dlmawhinney@eastlink.ca.

Sunny Corner Pastoral Charge, N.B., St. Stephen's, Sunny Corner, St. Paul's, Warwick; Rev. H. Martyn Van Essen, 7 Hierlihy Rd., Tabusintac, NB E9H 1Y5; 506-779-1812; hmvanessen@hotmail.com.

Synod of Quebec and Eastern Ontario

Aylmer, Ont., St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church; Rev. Greg Davidson, c/o St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 82 Kent St., Ottawa, ON K1P 5N9; 613-232-9042; gd@standrewsottawa.ca.

Gloucester (Ottawa), Ont., Gloucester Presbyterian Church; half-time minister; Interim Moderator Dr. Daniel MacKinnon, 1220 Old Tenth Line Rd., Orleans, ON K1E 3W7; 613-824-9260; pastordan@graceorleans.ca.

Lachute, Que., Margaret Rodger Memorial Presbyterian Church; Rev. Dr. Bill Klempa, 155 Lake Louisa Rd. N., Wentworth, QC J8H 0C5; 450-533-5321; wklemp@po-box.mcgill.ca.

Morrisburg, Ont., Knox; Dunbar, Ont., Dunbar; Rev. P. E. M. Chambers, PO Box 1513, Kemptville, ON K0G 1J0; 613-258-6654; perlcham@sympatico.ca.

Pincourt, Que., Ile Perrot; Mark Farrell, Convener, Search Committee, 242 Fifth Ave., Pincourt, QC J7V 5L3; 514-453-4796; markim@ca.inter.net.

Richmond, Ont., St. Andrew's; a call to dynamic, innovative, caring, family-focused ministry; Rev. Dr. Tom Gemmell, 38 Mary Hill Cres., Richmond, ON K0A 2Z0; 613-838-5949; tomgemmell@sympatico.ca.

Synod of Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda

Englehart, St. Paul's; Tomstown, Ont., Tomstown; St. Paul's and Tomstown Pastoral Charge approximately 10 km from Tomstown; full-time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Janice Hamalainen, PO Box 908, New Liskeard, ON P0J 1P0; 705-647-8401; jhamalainen@parolink.net.

Fenelon Falls, Ont., St. Andrew's and Glenarm, Ont., Knox; full-time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. D. Griffiths, 45 Bond St., Lindsay, ON K9V 3P9; 705-324-5992; db.griffiths@hotmail.com.

Harriston, Ont., Knox-Calvin; Rev. Kees Vandermey, 55 Church St., PO Box 638, Elora, ON N0B 1S0; 519-846-2420; vanknox@sentex.net.

Madoc, Ont., St. Peter's Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator c/o St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 110 Mill St., PO Box 118, Stirling, ON K0K 3E0; 613-395-5006; katherinejonah@hotmail.com.

Mississauga, Ont., Dixie Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Reid Chudley, PO Box 16, Hillsburgh, ON N0B 1Z0; 519-855-6216; r.chudley@bellnet.ca.

Mississauga, Ont., St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Peter Barrow, 24 Stavebank Rd. N., Mississauga, ON L5G 2T5; 905-278-8907; standrewspc@bellnet.ca.

Kitchener, St. Andrew's; full-time minister of pastoral care; Interim Moderator Rev. Don McCallum, 55 Devere Dr., Guelph, ON N1G 2T3; 519-866-9400; Don@kortrightchurch.org.

Richmond Hill, Ont., Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Daniel Scott, 39 Saint Ave., Bradford, ON L3Z 3E6; 905-775-7274; ddscott@rogers.com.

Sault Ste Marie, Ont., Westminster Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Deon Slabbert, 38 Country Club Place, Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6A 5Z9; 705-945-7885; revdeons@shaw.ca.

Scarborough, Ont., Westminster Presbyterian Church, Interim Moderator Rev. Ann Blane, 1300 Danforth Rd., Scarborough, ON M1J 1E8; 416-267-7897.

Toronto, Guildwood Community; Rev. J. P. Ian Morrison, 17 Earswick Dr., Scarborough, ON M1E 1C7; 416-265-0135; Ian.morrison@sympatico.ca.

West Toronto Presbytery, York Memorial; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Lance Odland, 11 Cross St., Toronto, ON M9N 2B8; 416-241-9533; lance@westonpresbyterianchurch.com.

Synod of Southwestern Ontario

Ancaster, St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Rev. Anne Yee-Hibbs, c/o Erskine Presbyterian Church, 19 Pearl St. N., Hamilton, ON L8R 2Y6; synodaec@on.aibn.com.

Burlington, Knox; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Philip Wilson, c/o Trinity Presbyterian Church, 720 Ninth Ave., Hamilton, ON L8T 2A3; 905-385-5984; revpmw@auracom.com.

Flamborough, West Flamboro Presbyterian Church; Rev. James Douglas, 17 Dixon Dr., Port Dover, ON N0A 1N4; 519-583-3220; jdouglas1@sympatico.ca.

Fonthill, Kirk-on-the-Hill; Rev. Dr. Jack Neil, c/o First Presbyterian Church, 176 Elm St., Port Colborne, ON L3K 4N6; 905-834-4288.

Forest, St. James; Interim Moderator Rev. Daniel Roushorne, c/o St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, PO Box 1381, Corunna, ON N0N 1G0; 519-862-3641; sapcorunna@xcelco.on.ca.

Hamilton, MacNab St.; Rev. George Robertson, 80 Mill St. N., PO Box 221, Waterdown, ON L0R 2H0; 905-689-8115; rev.george@bellnet.ca.

Hamilton, New Westminster; Rev. R. Docherty, c/o St. John's Presbyterian Church, 10 Mountain St., Grimsby, ON L3M 3J6; 905-945-5352.

Hamilton, St. Columba; Dr. Clyde Ervine, 165 Charlton Ave. W., Hamilton, ON L8P 2C8; 905-522-9098; cervine.central@on.aibn.com.

Kirkwall Presbyterian Church; full-time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Bob Dawson, 2138 Brant St., Burlington, ON L7P 3W5; 905-335-2640; minister@branthills.ca.

London, St. Lawrence; half-time; Interim Moderator Rev. Lynn Nichol, 783 Victoria St., London, ON N5Y 4C9; 519-434-2476; briarhill33@yahoo.ca.

Mitchell, Knox Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Catherine Calkin, 3403 Perth Rd. 130, R. R. 2, St. Pauls, ON N0K 1V0; 519-393-6395; calkin@quadro.net.

Molesworth, St. Andrew's; part-time position; John Zondag, 220 Livingstone Ave. N., Listowel, ON N4W 1P9; 519-291-4690; jzondag@wightman.ca.

VACANCIES

Sarnia, Paterson Memorial; Vacancy begins April 1, 2008; Rev. Ena Van Zoren; PO Box 421, Wyoming, ON N0N 1T0; 519-845-1931; enavanz@gmail.com.

Simcoe, St. Paul's; Rev. Dr. Stan Cox, Interim Moderator c/o St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, 85 Lot St., Simcoe, ON N3Y 1S4; 519-426-1845; sppc@kwic.com; www.stpaulssimcoe.com.

Stoney Creek, Heritage Green; half-time position; Interim Moderator Rev. Bob Geddes, c/o The South Gate Presbyterian Church, 120 Claredon Ave., Hamilton, ON L9A 3A5; 905-385-7444; bobgeddes@mountaincable.net.

Thornbury, St. Paul's; Rev. Alice Wilson, PO Box 20004, Hanover, ON N4N 3T1; standrews@wightman.ca.

Woodstock, Knox; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Lonnie Atkinson, c/o St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, 56 Thames St. S., Ingersoll, ON N5C 2S9; 519-485-3390; stpauls@execulink.com.

Synod of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario

Selkirk, Man., Knox Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Robert Murray, PO Box 222, Pinawa, MB R0E 1L0; 204-753-8439; pcf@granite.mb.ca.

Winnipeg, Man., St. James; Rev. Amy Campbell, 299 Olive St., Winnipeg, MB R3J 2X5; 204-831-5561; amethyst@mts.net.

Winnipeg, Man., Westwood; Rev. Matthew Brough, Knox, 341 Eveline St., Selkirk, MB R1A 1M9; mcbroug@shaw.ca or Rev. Kevin Macdonald, St. John's, 251 Bannerman Ave., Winnipeg, MB R2W 0T8; mactamal@yahoo.co.uk.

Synod of Saskatchewan

Regina, Norman Kennedy; Rev. Eric Muirhead, 2170 Albert St., Regina, SK S4P 2T9; revfirstpres@sasktel.net.

Saskatoon, Circle West; Parkview; Rev. Amanda Currie, 436 Spadina Cres. E, Saskatoon, SK S7K 3G6; 306-242-0525; standrews@sasktel.net.

Weyburn, Knox; Interim Moderator Rev. Tae-Wook (Jonathan) Kwon; PO Box 7, Grenfell, SK S0G 2B0; 306-697-2612; joyktw@hotmail.com.

Synod of Alberta and the Northwest

Dayspring Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Harry Currie, 10025 105 St. NW, Edmonton, AB T5J 1C8; 780-422-2937; hcurrie@incentre.net

Edmonton, Alta., Strathcona Presbyterian Church; www.spchurch.ca; Interim Moderator Rev. Annabelle Wallace, 423-14259 50th St. NW, Edmonton, AB T5A 5J2; 780-633-0170; annabellew@shaw.ca.

Fort McMurray, Alta., Faith Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Lloyd Fourney, 18512 92nd Ave., Edmonton, AB T5T 1P4; 780-481-1614; fourney@hotmail.com.

Medicine Hat, Alta., St. John's Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Diane V. Beach, 212 Perry Cres. NE, Medicine Hat, AB T1C 1X3; home 403-526-3512, office 403-526-4542; dianebeach@shaw.ca.

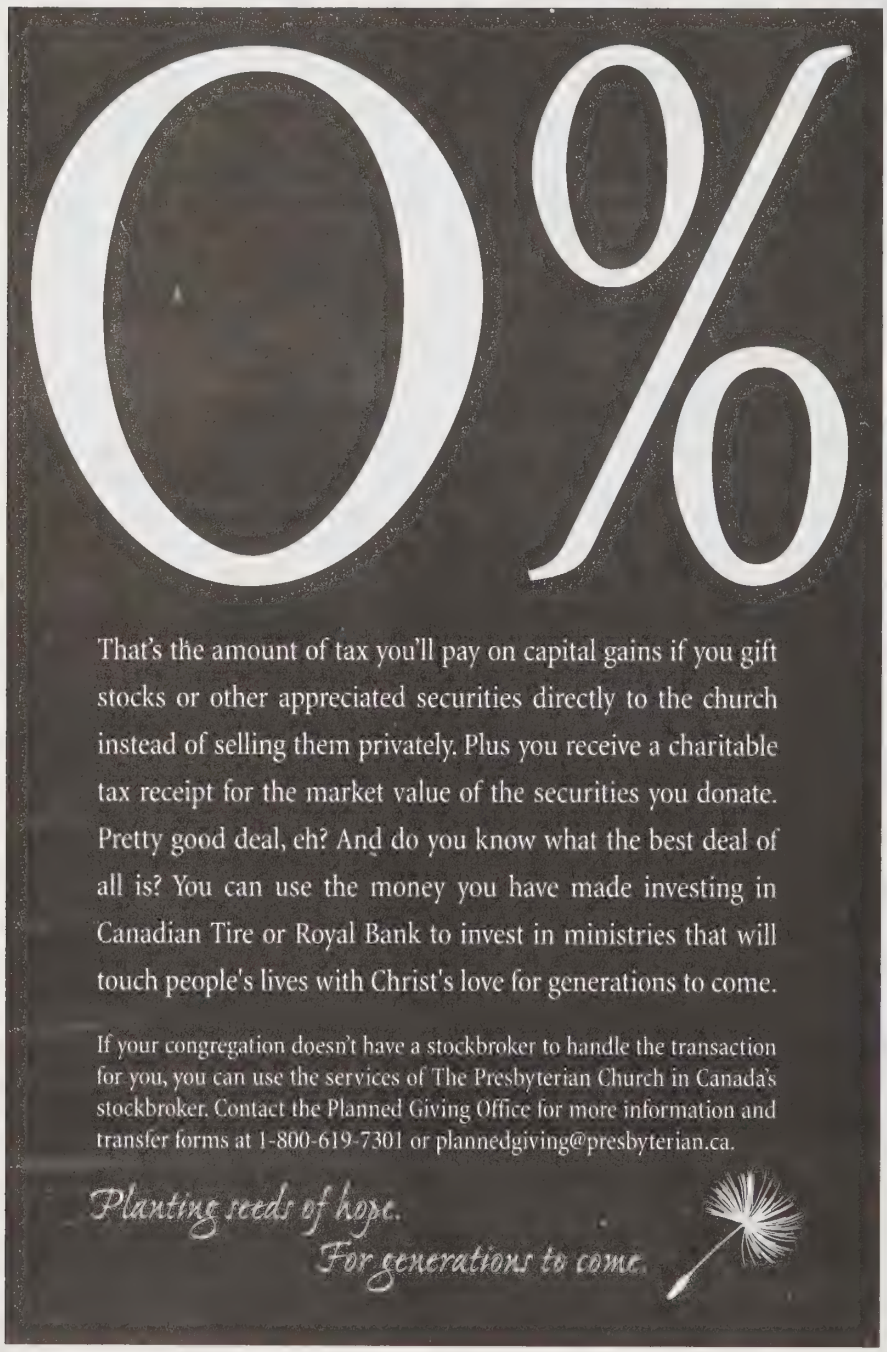
Synod of British Columbia

Armstrong, St. Andrew's; effective July 1, 2007; Rev. Doug Swanson, 1981 9th Ave. NE, Salmon Arm, BC V1E 1M1; 250-832-7282; standrews@jetstream.net.

Nanaimo, St. Andrew's; Dr. John F. Allan, 4235 Departure Bay Rd., Nanaimo, BC V9T 1C9; jfallan@shaw.ca.

Slocan Valley, St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Rev. Gavin Robertson, c/o First Presbyterian Church, 1139 Pine Ave., Trail, BC V1R 4R2; 250-364-0335; firstpc@telus.net.

Sooke, Knox Presbyterian Church; Interim



Moderator Rev. Kerry McIntyre, 531 Herbert St., Duncan, BC V9L 1T2; kmcintyre@standrewsduncan.org.

Vancouver, Chinese Presbyterian Church, Associate Minister (English Ministry); Interim Moderator Rev. Diane Tait-Katerberg, c/o Chinese Presbyterian Church, 6137 Cambie St., Vancouver, BC V5Z 3B2; katerberg@dccnet.com.

Victoria, Chinese (bilingual, English/Cantonese); Rev. H. McNabb, 760 Latoria Rd., Victoria, BC V9C 3A4; hamcnabb@shaw.ca

Recognitions, Ordinations & Inductions

On July 8, 2007: Induction Service for Rev. Jane Swatridge at West Vancouver Presbyterian Church, West Vancouver, B.C.

Obituaries

BISGROVE, Ethel, elder at St. Andrew's, St. Lambert, Que., since 1976 and member of the Order of Canada. In 1973, she co-founded the St. Lambert Council for Seniors and devoted her life to running its centre, the Maison Desaulniers. From 1979 to 2003 she was chairperson of the Ecumenical Community Services, which provides a food bank, Meals on Wheels and rides to medical appointments. She also poured her considerable organizational and pastoral energies into the congregation until her final days. At her funeral in May, the mayor commended her life as "a model for the whole St. Lambert community." She will be missed. "Well done, good and faithful servant."

BLACKWELL, Hazel Hughena, wife of Rev. Gordon Blackwell, Saint John, N.B., went home to be with our Lord on July 5, 2007. She is survived by her loving husband Gordon to whom she was married for 52 years; a brother Hugh (Marjorie) of Smiths Falls, Ont.; a niece, Heather, and family; a nephew, William, and family. She was predeceased by her parents Emery and Christena Valley; her brothers Flight Sergeant William Allan Valley R.C.A.F., killed in action during World War II, and Cameron (May) Valley; and a favourite grandmother and aunt.

In 1955 she went with her husband to his mission appointment, the Lancaster, Hampton, Barnesville and Sussex Charge. Later, when the charge was divided, she continued to work faithfully by his side at Saint Columba Church. When Lancaster was amalgamated with Saint John, the church was relocated to a growing area and a new edifice erected. Hazel continued to be active, teaching in the church school, leading a weekly children's group and sharing in the pastoral work alongside her husband.

When she was close to the time for leaving this world, she would point upward toward the western sky where the lights were being dimmed in the hospital. When asked, she could not tell her husband what she was seeking. He said he was reminded of the words of Rev. James Foote at the memorial service for her brother held in St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Carleton Place, Ont. In the presence of the members of William's family, his air crew, the mayor, council and many friends, Mr. Foote said of Will that he sought no sheltered place—but one of hazard, near the pilot. As a navigator, he had before him two landscapes, earth and heaven. That night as his plane returned to the landscape of earth, Will's spirit entered the landscape of a new world with whose spiritual geography he was familiar. He entered it with his spiritual Pilot who has vanquished death. It was not merely a stream of flak that overtook the young airman that night but a streaming of light and goodness of God, opening fresh fields to a pure and lovely spirit. His was a life that gave a strong testimony of Christian faith. He has gone to God's future house where, if our faith be strong enough, we may still walk with Him.

Hazel's husband says that a very similar tribute could be paid to his faithful wife. She strongly believed in the affirmation of the shorter catechism that the chief purpose of mankind is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

EASUN, Margaret, aged 89 and a long-time member of First Presbyterian Church, Chatham, Ont.

ELLIS, Ryan, passed away on May 8, 2007. A long-time member of Stamford Presbyterian Church, Niagara Falls, Ont., he served his church faithfully as an elder, treasurer and in many other areas of church life. He will be missed.

MCLAREN, Archibald D., passed away on May 20, 2007, at age 74. His death followed a long and courageous battle against cancer. Archie is dearly missed by his wife, Anita; three children, Donald, Barb, Doug and their families; and his many friends at Mount Zion Presbyterian Church, Ridgetown, Ont. Well respected throughout the entire community, Archie was particularly noted at Mount Zion for the quiet, effective manner in which he served the congregation for many years. Holding positions of elder, church school superintendent and historian, among others, he will be most remembered for his untiring efforts as clerk of session. Memories of his humble service will stand as a worthy example for all.

MORROW, James (Jim), a long-time Presbyterian, elder and former clerk of session of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Windsor, Ont., passed away suddenly on May 25, 2007, at the age of 75 years. Jim was very active in his church and was a proud Rotarian of Club Branch Number 1918.

NEIL, John (Jack), aged 80 and a member and elder of First Presbyterian Church, Chatham, Ont.

THOMSON, Mrs. Evelyn Josephine, (nee Settle) died in Bracebridge, Ont., on September 14, 2004, in her 73rd year. She was a supportive wife and homemaker to her husband, Rev. Dr. James A. Thomson; mother and stabilizer to their three sons Stuart, David and Eoin; and very proud grandmother to Eric, Bethany and Kaylagh.

Evelyn participated as she felt called to do in each of Jim's congregations. She was particularly gifted in welcoming new visitors, adherents and members. Following Jim's retirement, Evelyn served as an elder of the church at Knox in Bracebridge. During the last 25 years of her life she led a women's Bible study group with religious curiosity, self-discipline and personal joy.

Evelyn approached her handwork (basketry, fine needlework, macramé, rug hooking and sewing) with the same precise attention that she gave to all her homemaking and leisure-time activities. She was a competent, fulfilled, happy and proud wife, mother, daughter, sister and homemaker. Evelyn and Jim also derived much pleasure from life-long friendships within their extended Presbyterian family.

She is survived by her husband Jim; her sons Stuart (Debbie), David (Tracy) and Eoin; her grandchildren Eric, Bethany, Kaylagh and Isaac who was born in 2006; her mother Gertrude Settle; her sisters Shirley and Audrey; her nephews Zenon and Leonard, Warren and Durward; and an abundance of loving friends in Bracebridge and Orillia, Ont., and throughout Canada. Evelyn was predeceased by her father Ernest Settle and her brothers-in-law Zenon Stepniewnski and Gerald Smith.

Three years later we continue to mourn her passing while still drawing on her innate wisdom and gentle humour. ■

The Wisdom of Elders

A gifted session is key to building a strong congregation. BY REV. DR. J. H. HANS KOUWENBERG



Although the Christian church year officially begins in Advent—the four Sundays leading up to Christmas—practically, it begins for us at the beginning of September, after the summer holidays, when the church begins the next year's activities. Preparation for that task belongs to the elders in each local congregation. They hold the congregation to its vision and purpose. They oversee everything that takes place in the local church.

My theme for my moderatorial year is the health and well-being of the local church. Although our regional, national and international connections are important, there is in fact no church apart from the local church. The local church is the operations centre of Jesus Christ's building and re-building work in the world. What makes for a healthy church? Christian A. Schwarz speaks of the importance of empowering leadership, gift-oriented ministries, passionate spirituality, functional structures, inspiring worship services, lively study and community-oriented small groups, need-oriented evangelism, and loving relationships as being essential keys to a church's well-being.

I'm convinced we often underestimate the power of the local team of elders in developing appropriate strategies and excellent examples for ministry and mission in each of our churches. As every Presbyterian knows, eldership is the way a Presbyterian church is governed. Elders are the people's representatives. There ought to be all kinds of ages and gifts represented on each team of elders. Some time ago, The Presbyterian Church in Canada agreed the only requirements for elders were biblical: "Elders ought to be an example to the believers in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim. 1:12). Some elders will be more gifted administratively, some pastorally. Some will be innovative and change-oriented, some will be good at carrying out what is planned. Some will be evangelical, others will be socially concerned. Any congregation will need all the gifts it can muster.

When I asked my session what gifts elders needed to possess, I received the following: spiritual maturity, ability to use the Bible wisely, a sense of purpose for themselves and their church, a willingness to get to know and serve the people, integrity, empathy and grace, as well as some knowledge of the *Book of Forms*, and the ability to work well in a team, and to uphold the decisions of the majority.

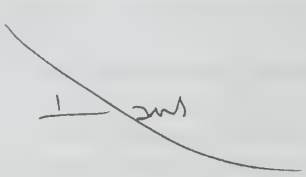
We're finding we need to educate our elders and elders-elect. So we've instituted an elder orientation course for those who are elders and for those who may be considering eldership. What are some key things elders need to know? The love and saving grace of God, the purpose and mission of the church, the statements and rules of our faith, the responsibilities of eldership, how a session meeting works, how a presbytery works and how to communicate with encouragement.

When I asked what a session looks for in its minister as leader of the team, I obtained the following helpful responses: a heart for serving God, family, and congregation; an ability to interpret and teach the Word of God; spiritual leadership; having the ability to walk a fine line between moving a meeting along, while ensuring that all members are heard. Elders have told me they are frustrated by petty bickering, the narrow, contrary view, or when we don't listen carefully to each other. We can all learn more about team-building. At Calvin Church, we have found it to be helpful to remind ourselves that treating each other with grace, forgiveness and respect is one of our core values.

I find my elders appreciate an opportunity to reflect on the opening Bible study of each meeting by responding to a related question that gives them permission to share. They also enjoy our annual retreat, and want more social gatherings. We need to celebrate our achievements.

High among the reasons I was willing to be considered as a candidate for the position of moderator of our church is the encouragement and support of my elders. They are aware of the responsibilities involved. Even now they help out by leading in the worship services, and in their daily prayers. I am grateful for them and I pray for them.

May your congregation's eldership team grow in its appreciation of one another and contribute more and more to the dynamism of your church! ■



Hans Kouwenberg



Gifts needed on session: spiritual maturity, ability to use the Bible wisely, a sense of purpose for themselves and their church, a willingness to get to know and serve the people—with character traits of integrity, empathy, care and grace, as well as some knowledge of the *Book of Forms* and the ability to work well in a team and to uphold the decisions of the majority.

The Calvin, Abbotsford, B.C. session: back, Ted Bryde, Derrick Dick, Grant Allan, Rev. Dr. Hans Kouwenberg, Susan Swanney, Stan Weismiller, Bill Village. Front, Cathy Thomson, Anne Friesen, Margaret Rowley, Joan Grant, Beverley Albon, Alan Rowley.



The local church is the operations centre of Jesus Christ's building and re-building work in the world.

A rainwater tank for a community in Tanzania costs $4,000 through PWS&D. The children and youth at Calvin, Abbotsford, B.C., learned about how precious water is in our world, then held a fundraiser from October 2006 to April 2007 and raised $4167.62!

Back: Marg Smith, Hans Kouwenberg, Lizzie Eccles, Megan Eccles, Sarah Scott, Jordan Kiss, Sarah Smith. Middle: Aiden McDonald, Callum McDonald, Logan McDonald, Ryan Moeliker, Jean Leslie. Front: Luke Blaak, Adrian Kiss, Michelle Scott. Several children and youth who helped are missing from this photo.

MISSION: POSSIBLE

Canada:

Provide dignity and compassion for refugees

Action Réfugiés Montréal (ARM) is a PCC-funded organization in Montreal, Quebec whose task it is to provide support for refugees who are looking for a fresh start in a new country. ARM staff visit detention centres behind barbed wired fences to provide emotional support to traumatized people from all over the world and to connect them to immigration professionals.



- $20 buys a phone card
- $50 helps ARM staff provide emotional support
- $100 provides a group training session
- $400 provides a long-term connection with a detainee

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ORO VOTES TO LEAVE | A CALL TO PRAYER | PILGRIMAGE TO SANTIAGO

PRESBYTERIAN Record

October 2007

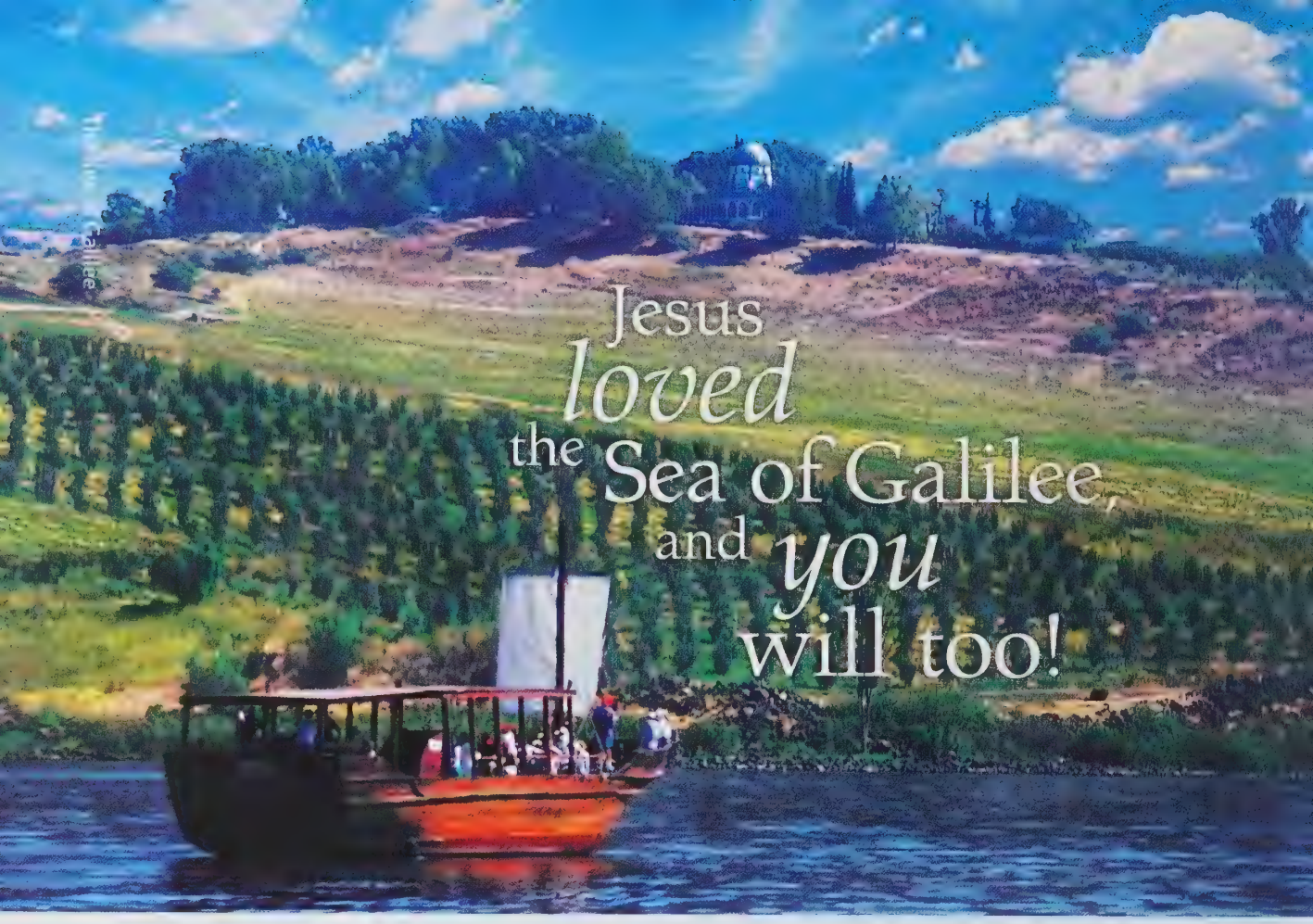


Afghanistan

A SPECIAL REPORT

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Afghanistan's Dusty Hope

A Special Report by Andrew Faiz





On the Cover:
School teachers in Bamiyan, in the background, hope these girls will get an education. But, the teachers must first convince their mothers.

PRESBYTERIAN
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A CUP OF WATER

A little hospitality goes a long way.

BY DAVID HARRIS



A few weeks ago I spotted a small story in the newspaper about an imam in Lebanon issuing a fatwa banning so-called honour killings—the murder of a close female relative by a male for an alleged sexual crime.

Lebanon's most senior Shiite cleric rightly called it a "repulsive act" noting that the murderers almost always get away with it. It was disappointing to see a courageous story about a culture-challenging Muslim leader get so little play at a time when negative stories about Muslims get a big headlines.

The blame for this does not lie exclusively with media but with all of us who fail to condemn the almost daily slurs against the world's second-largest faith group. What we should be doing is supporting and encouraging moderate Muslims.

This shows how important General Assembly's action was this summer in broadening the mandate of the ecumenical and interfaith committee to include interfaith dialogue and promoting educational programs in the church about other faiths.

Assembly was also addressed by Toronto imam Dr. Hamid Slimi, who chairs the Canadian Council of Imams. In introducing Slimi to assembly, Rev. Will Ingram noted that interfaith dialogue doesn't mean glossing over important differences in belief, since there is no integrity in that.

What it does mean is discovering what religions actually teach and what is culture disguised as religion. It is no different in that sense than any other dialogue with someone or some group that is different than you or the group you belong to.

This month's cover story focuses on Afghanistan. You have probably read in papers and magazines and watched on television more about Afghanistan than you think you want to know. But I urge you to read Andrew Faiz's story carefully. This is a story about the beleaguered inhabitants and the people who are helping them to repair their country.

It is really a story about your faith in action, since your donations go to support vital church-sponsored development work.

It is also, as Andrew also notes in his pop culture column, about Jesus' command that we offer those in need a "cup of water;" hospitality by any other name.

In the Middle and Near East, hospitality has an enormous place in the culture. In dry, dusty places, a footbath is welcome at the end of a journey, as the Gospels record it was for Jesus. Today, you also get a cup of tea.

But hospitality is more than that there. It means protecting the life of your guest at the expense of your own if need be. What is truly ironic is that the Latin roots of the word (*hostis* and *pa = hospes*) mean feeding the stranger, not hosting your friends at a dinnerparty.

What assembly endorsed then was really an extension of hospitality to those who are different than we are; those who hold different beliefs than we do.

At a time when some people publish dubious theories about a clash of civilizations, it is especially important for those of us in the majority culture to welcome and support moderates of other cultures.

Fear drives people of all cultures into their own huddle and to emphasize what marks them as different from others. Assembly has called the church to do the opposite: while never forsaking our faith, to welcome those that are different into our midst to seek "peace, love and understanding," as the song puts it.

As Jesus taught, a cup of water—a little hospitality—goes a long way. ■

David Harris

Letters

letters@presbyterianrecord.ca



Matheson decision affects all ministers

Congratulations to Rev. Gael Matheson for her doggedness in fighting the Presbytery of P.E.I., and winning at least a minimal financial award and reinstatement with the help of the human rights commission. I hope that the presbytery will, at last, recognize that this is a paltry price to pay for her long years of seeking a remedy for the brutal bullying and public humiliation that she suffered in one of its congregations. The presbytery should be encouraged to act generously and ensure that Matheson immediately receives appropriate employment, her legal fees are covered, she is offered a formal opportunity to be reconciled to those who led the fight against her, and she receives other appropriate means of support. The *Record* article is somewhat disingenuous by indicating the numbers of women in leadership roles in P.E.I., as if this would indicate an isolated incident. The issue was bullying and harassment, which happens to both women and men clergy. Many would agree that such behaviour is a common experience for clergy in the PCC. Ministers have the appearance of authority but are dependent on popularity with their congregations and fellow presbyters for their livelihoods. They have little procedural recourse and minimal financial resources with which to defend their careers if they lose their popularity and do not have another congregation and/or presbytery to quickly jump to. The Matheson story makes me wonder if there is a coming day, as with the residential schools, when the churches will be forced by the state to settle with hundreds of clergy who have suffered wrongful dismissal, harassment, bullying and public humiliation. One should note from the story that individuals would personally be called to account for their actions. This should make at least a few elders and presbyters think a little more before they mindlessly throw their hand in with the lynching mob.

JAY BRENNAN, WHITBY, ONT.

I would like to know what simple mathematics Matheson's lawyer Peter Ghiz is using. In the 1998 Acts and Proceedings, the stipend for the four charges for Murray Harbour North (if she could handle four) total $26,677. Multiply by 10 and subtract her earnings since her dismissal and it comes to far less than $600,000.

MR. G. MACKINTOSH, PORT COQUITLAM, B.C.

Moderate the title

The debated stole, I expect, in many people's minds at this year's assembly, was a stole of office for the moderator of our church. We don't have such an office in The Presbyterian Church in Canada, at least we didn't the last time I was awake, and neither do we need a stole to demarcate it. The person who moderates a particular assembly is just that, the moderator of that particular assembly, and nothing more. That the person works as an ambassador for the church for a year and sits on some influential committees does not change this fact. And yet, each year, and throughout the year, the

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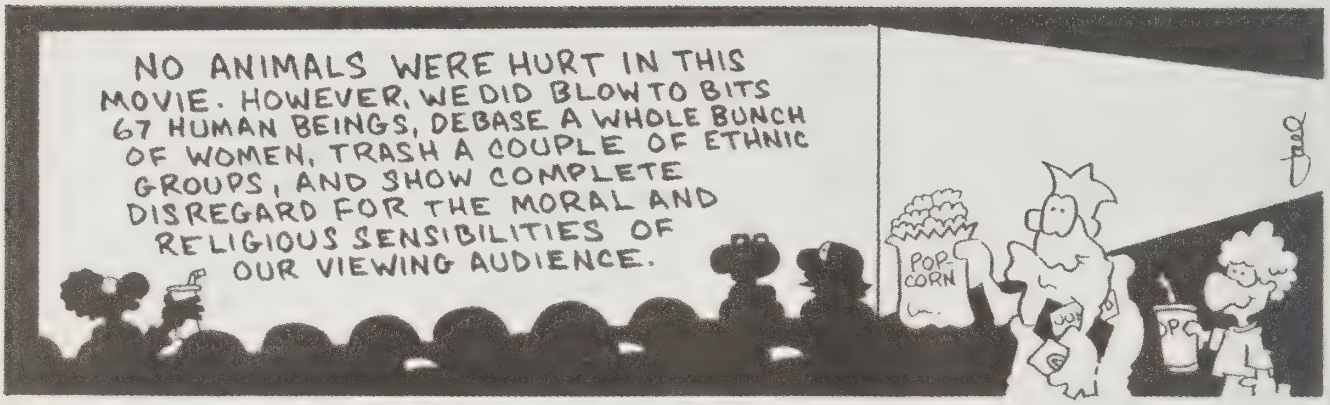
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Pontius' Puddle



Record continues to coronate a person The Moderator of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. As you well know, or at least should, the proper language is, "The Moderator of the 133rd General Assembly." If the *Record* would begin to assert the truth by the language it uses around this issue and the way it presents this person on its pages, I expect it would go a long way toward contravening idiotic debates about stoles of office and other related nonsense about moderators, including the correcting of what I perceive is our denomination's drift towards an Episcopalian model of church government or perhaps something even worse. To be quite frank, I do not have the stomach for this drift.

DAVID WEBBER, MISSIONARY IN THE CARIBOO

Another side

It was really refreshing to read Gloria Wasacase's article in the May issue on her time working at a residential school. Over the last few decades all that seems to get printed about the Residential Indian Schools has been stories of abuse: sexual, physical and cultural.

There is another side that Gloria brings out. Most certainly the students at Birtle and Cecilia Jeffery received a better and broader education than they could ever have obtained on a school on a reservation.

I served as part-time chaplain at Birtle Residential Indian School in the late 1950s and early 1960s and it was an experience that I have treasured ever since! I came to appreciate native culture in a new way as I attended native dances and powwows at the school. I also became acquainted with a number of the students who came back to share their experiences after they graduated from programs in nursing, teaching and many other skills. I am sure that without the loving care and encouragement they received at Birtle they would never have ventured into the 'white man's world.'

One of the students at Birtle at that time was Gordon Williams who later graduated from university and theological college and became the first native-born Presbyterian minister. A counselor there at the time was Colin Wasacase whom I had the privilege of tutoring in preparation for his re-entering university after failing his first attempt as a student. He later went on to become a teacher and school principal. I still remember watching Colin on the outdoor rink at the school, skating circles around staff and students alike and playing excellent hockey even though he only had a stump where his right arm should have been.

REV. EDWARD SMITH, TORONTO

Give it up for Salman

Re Salman's Sir insensitive, July/August

The British government, like any other free government, has a right to honour its citizens. Some governments deny many human rights to their citizens, including communist and Muslim governments.

To me, Salman Rushdie is a very courageous person, but not more so than Poland's Lech Walesa, who beat the whole might of the ex-Soviet Union empire.

RALPH FORSHAW, NANAIMO, B.C.

A deal breaker

I was shocked to read in the July-August issue that at the 133th General Assembly our denomination was encouraged to engage in interfaith dialogue with the Muslim Society in Canada. Are we serious? Where do we meet? Muslims believe that only they will make it to heaven, providing they have earned their way and Allah's approval of their good deeds. To the Muslims, women have no voice; they are merely subjects and must be available for their husband at any time. Worst of all, Muslims believe they can work their way to heaven, totally rejecting that salvation is a gift through God's grace in Jesus Christ, the risen Lord. You have no idea how sad I feel when I read this as part of the report. To see the picture of the Muslim leader, who according to the report "charmed the Commisioners," is almost unbelievable. How do we take a stand for Christ? No, I am not the person who will turn his back on people of a different religion. But interfaith dialogue

with the Muslim society? What are we trying to prove? Does it surprise us that our denomination is steadily declining? Are we not closing more churches than starting new ones? Are many small congregations not waiting long vacancies going without a minister? I know some readers will not agree with me, claiming we should be more flexible since this is 2007. Really? Cal Brown hits the nail right on the head in his article We've Got To Stop Meeting Like This. No doubt this issue will be a deal-breaker, as stated. Do I want to support our church when it encourages that kind of dialogue? Absolutely not! However, this may well be a way to speed up the decline of our denomination, and that's sad news, don't you think? We need to pray that God's Holy Spirit will call us to faithfulness in His service. "As believers we have communion with God the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit." [Question 85, *A Catechism For Today.*]

HUGH APPEL, LONDON, ONT.

A minor correction to your article on Ernie Regehr in the July/August issue.

The Responsibility to Protect is not (as yet) United Nations policy. Even if the UN eventually adopts R2P, churches and ecumenical bodies are not bound by an actual application of R2P. Churches would consider, on a case-by-case basis, the merits of a decision by the UN to implement R2P.

The task for the Presbyterian Church is to decide if the principles of R2P are ones that it can (or cannot) accept.

The independent International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) was established by the Canadian government in September 2000 in response to a challenge issued to the international community by Kofi Annan, then Secretary-General of the United Nations, to try and come to consensus on the basic principles and processes involved in the Responsibility to Protect. The Commission submitted its report in December 2001. The Commission outlined six principles which resonate with traditional Just War Theory: 1) declared by legitimate authority, 2) carried out with right intention, 3) last resort, 4) follow the principle of proportionality, 5) reasonable prospects of success, 6) with all moderation possible.

The principles and implications of R2P are being considered by ecumenical bodies around the world, including the World Council of Churches and the Canadian Council of Churches. Relevant sections can be found in the International Affairs Committee report to General Assembly.

STEPHEN ALLEN, ASSOCIATE SECRETARY, JUSTICE MINISTRIES

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"A New Home"

15-year-old Manny and his mother became part of the Evangel Hall Mission community shortly after he was admitted to the hospital for a blood transfusion.

They were then living in a dirty, insect-infested rooming house, feeling very dispossessed in their community. Concerned about the impact these poor living conditions were having on Manny's health, the staff of the Hospital for Sick Children contacted Evangel Hall Mission. It was crucial that this family find a suitable place to live.

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People & Places

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Tha pink thing is a DVD and it has several stories to tell. On the actual disc are stories of four people in York Region, Ont., who live with HIV/AIDS. It was produced by the AIDS Committee of York Region, a coalition of community groups. Including, Unionville Presbyterian which has been actively and faithfully involved in AIDS mission, through PWS&D and local community initiatives for a few years. Seen here: Pat Richards, Rev. Gordon Timbers, Amutha Samgam (ACYR), Radha Bhardwaj (ACYR), Lisa Robertson, Susan Robertson, Nancy Robertson (producer).For more photos and a detailed article please visit our website.



Let's see now: it's raining. So the location could only be the west coast. And, they're smiling. So, the occasion could only be a happy one. West Vancouver was delighted to welcome their new minister, Rev. Jane Swatridge in July. Back: Garth Lawrence, Liz Birdie, Barbel Jurrius, Swatridge, Rev. Bob Garvin. Front: Rob Alexander, Jean Lawrence, Andy Whitelaw, Anne Vernon. And don't worry Jane, you'll get used to the weather. As the umbrella says, "Under the umbrella of God's grace."



They say a picture is worth a thousand words, but in this case it's that communion set that is the great story teller. First, Edmonton, gave that set to Eastminster, Edmonton, about 47 years ago shortly after Eastminster was established. They paid the honour forward to a new congregation in Yellowknife. It was returned to Eastminster, which then gifted it to a new church in Fort McMurray. Eastminster is on the move to a new location and in June Dorine Patton and Marie Murray returned the historic set to Bud Liversidge of First. Let's hope there are other new congregations that can benefit from this charm.



If you're looking for a dynamic Vacation Bible School for the young ones next summer, consider the one at Springville, Pictou County, N.S., which had 90 students, and collected mission offerings for the Corts family which is working in Uruguay and Camp Geddie. The commute may be a tad long for those in B.C., but well worth it. This photo was taken on the circus-themed dress up day. People and Places is a big believer in the spiritual powers of big red clown noses.



Kay Wilson, seen here with her husband Richard, has been the pianist/organist for Trinity, Campbell River, B.C., since its inception over 26 years ago. Kay has led Trinity's music ministry all these years, in many ways, with tireless energy. She has been one of the saints that keep the church alive. She retired this year.



Circumstantially this year they all happened to be young men—members of St. Andrew's, Duncan, B.C., who graduated from high school to future adventures. Each year the congregation celebrates their graduates. This year's crop: Clayton Broughton, Iain McIntyre, Grayden Gamble, Bryson Harder, Arlen Ziprick, Damien Andrews, Matt Harder, Daniel Strong, Neil Hindle and Jordan Findlay. Missing, Simon Woods.

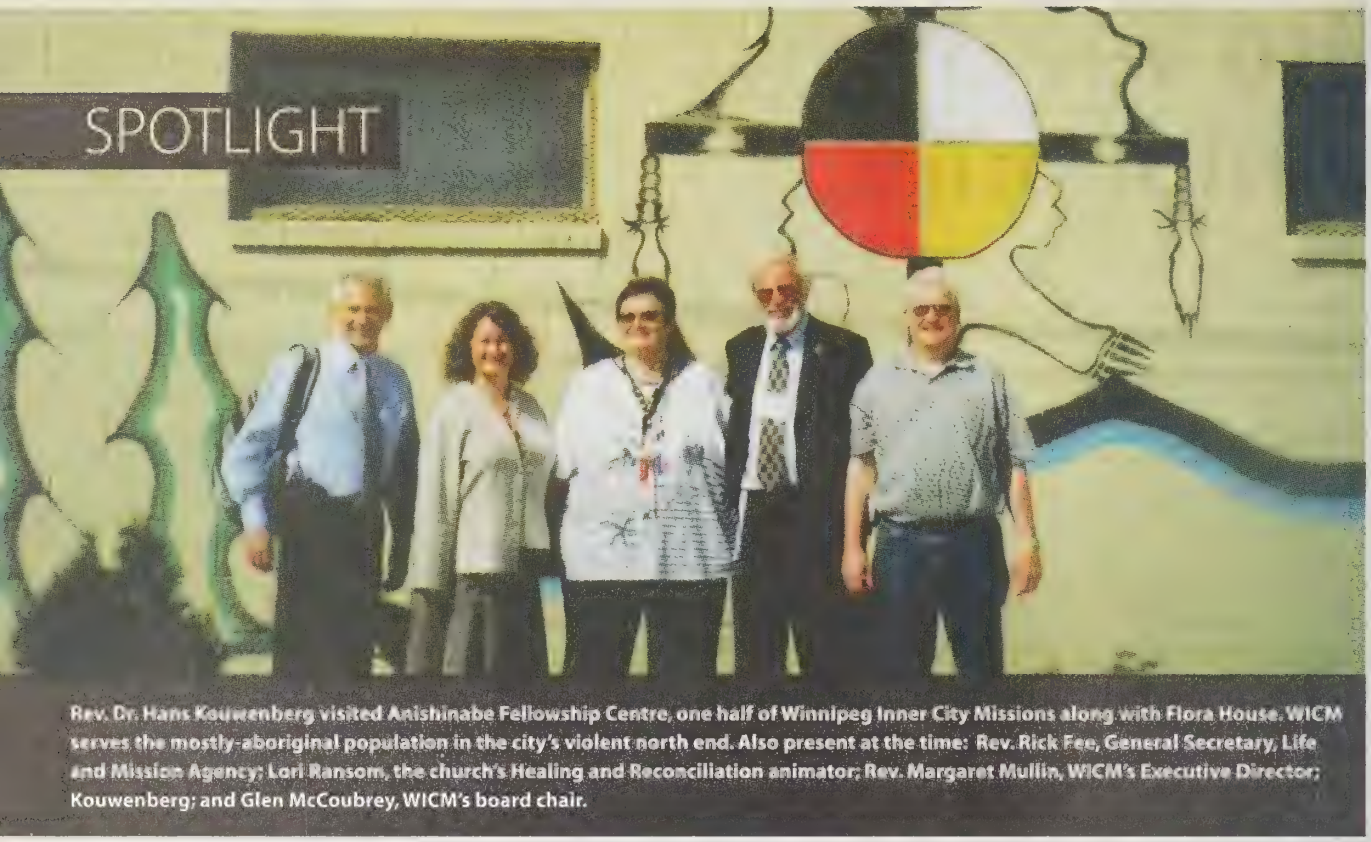
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Montreal's Scotsman of the year, Spring Tea at St. Paul's, Port Hope, Ont., amalgamating Atlantic presbyteries, communicants at Knox, St. Catharines, Ont., and many other saints who enrich the church daily.



Rev. Dr. Hans Kouwenberg visited Anishinabe Fellowship Centre, one half of Winnipeg Inner City Missions along with Flora House. WICM serves the mostly-aboriginal population in the city's violent north end. Also present at the time: Rev. Rick Fee, General Secretary, Life and Mission Agency; Lori Ransom, the church's Healing and Reconciliation animator; Rev. Margaret Mullin, WICM's Executive Director; Kouwenberg; and Glen McCoubrey, WICM's board chair.

O-Be-Joyful Fiesta

Remembering Margaret Avison. BY REV. DR. J. H. (HANS) KOUWENBERG

MARGARET AVISON, a much-celebrated Canadian poet described as "one of the great religious poets" of the 20th century—and who spent a while sojourning among Presbyterians at Knox, Spadina, Toronto, from the 1960s to the 1990s—passed away at age 89 on July 27 from complications following hip surgery after a fall. She won the prestigious Griffin Poetry Prize four years ago and was twice a winner of the Governor General's Award for poetry in a literary career that spanned 40 years. Her first award-winning book of poetry, *Winter Sun*, was published in 1960. She became what she called a "committed Christian" in 1963 by "listening" more deeply to the message of the Bible and, after that time, as is so evident in her next book, *The Dumbfounding* (1966), she often wrote about her deeply held, yet private, personal Christian faith. Many critics compare her work to the great metaphysical poets of the 17th century.

I met Margaret in the early 1970s. We met at Evangel Hall, a social service ministry of the church in Toronto. I was a rather callow, uninformed student at the time and she must have noticed this by my fumbling words about her work. True to her outspoken nature, she tartly told me that she wasn't doing social work there "to help" people; she was simply showing up, being there, where God wanted her to be! She graciously left me with a fresh poem in my marked-up copy of *The Dumbfounding*, entitled Re: Luke 13:22-33, and dated March 16, 1971. I do not believe it has ever been published so I would like to share it as a tribute to her seemingly artless, yet great artistic skill and abiding Christian faith, which has often sustained and illuminated me in my own personal devotions.

The Kingdom-come Voice
tells us to make for the
o-be-joyful fiesta
as our King makes for the tree.
'Everybody, of course?'
Only the few who force
their way through the door
that must crush the First, before.
'How can we help but run away
from the war when the One
gets killed and the others die
& leave us alone in the way?'
The two to Emmaus were three
with an o-be-joyful at close of day.
'O such be our finding always!'

Her other volumes include *No Time, Not Yet but Still*, and *Concrete and Wild Carrots*. I will miss her voice. I heartily recommend her work to you! ■

Oro Votes to Leave Denomination

New form of ministry calls for drastic measures. BY AMY MACLACHLAN



ONE OF THE LARGEST PRESBYTERIAN congregations in the country voted in August to leave the denomination. Trinity Community Church in Oro, Ont., dreams of morphing into a multi-site church with numerous satellite locations in order to draw more people inside its soon-to-be multiple walls. However, currently, there is no accommodation within the *Book of Forms* for a single congregation to be part of more than one presbytery.

"Our goal is to reach more people and change their minds about God," said Rev. Carey Nieuwhof, Trinity's senior minister. "And to see lives transformed."

To best do that, said Nieuwhof, Trinity will have to strike out on its own.

On the last Sunday before Labour Day, members and adherents discussed, debated, and voted on whether or not they wanted to remain a part of the PCC. Of the 382 people present, 97 per cent voted to leave their Presbyterian roots behind. (Of that number 103 were members, the rest adherents or teens.) Voting remained open for another week or so, as many of the approximately 1,400 regular Trinity-goers were yet to cast a ballot. The final results were not in at press time.

"I am surprised and humbled at the percentage of votes in favour of this," said Nieuwhof. "It affirms and confirms our direction."

Thanks to a partnership with North Point Ministries in Alpharetta, Georgia, a relationship Nieuwhof has nurtured for the last three years, Trinity's direction includes planting satellite locations to not only attract new members, but to enable people who already attend Trinity (many of whom drive 90 minutes to two hours to Oro) to go to church closer to home—and hopefully bring their friends with them. Trinity would be North Point's "strategic partner" and the home base for the ministry's new Canadian extension.

Nothing is yet finalized, and the next step is for Trinity leaders to meet with a special presbytery committee appointed to discuss the matter, tally the votes, discuss how assets will be handled, and present a recommendation to the Presbytery of Barrie, which was to meet Sept. 11. There they will discern if the congregation should be dissolved entirely, or if there are enough loyal Presbyterians who want to continue.

If Trinity does secede it will have to negotiate whether it can purchase its building from the denomination. The plan is for the new non-denominational church to open on Dec. 2. Nieuwhof said they hope to open three campuses in the next year, possibly in Barrie, Orillia and Bracebridge. A Toronto campus is also planned.

Both Nieuwhof and Rev. Stephen Kendall, principal clerk, were quick to point out that the denomination has been helpful all along, encouraging Trinity's leaders to pursue new forms of ministry within the Presbyterian Church. But Trinity's leadership decided the process would most likely take too long—possibly years—something the congregation simply doesn't want. "We need to get on with the mission God has given us," said Nieuwhof.

Despite any differences, Nieuwhof stressed the desire for a positive outcome. "Our concern is for the peace and unity of the church. We want to move through this with a mutual blessing. The goal is not to burn bridges, but to treat each other with love and respect."

Trinity leaders began to discuss their plans about two years ago. By spring of this year, the elders decided that in order to fulfill their vision, "it was best to leave the denomination," as noted on Trinity's website. To do so, the leadership "made a decision to resign no later than November 15, 2007, and to begin a new church. Our hope is that all or most Trinity people would join us in this new church to fulfill and continue the vision we have discerned together."

Presbytery clerk Rev. Dr. Jim Sitler said the situation highlights a few issues for the denomination: that the PCC has no process for a congregation to leave; current polity does not envision multi-site ministries; and, that the matter could benefit from study and input from the wider church.

"Our church must wake up, forget more of the same, or we will continue to face questions of rapid decline and irrelevance to our culture," said Jim Fraser, a Trinity member who supports the changes in Trinity's structure but wishes they could occur within the denomination. "The Presbyterian Church has a death wish when our church structures cannot affirm vibrant churches that are growing, but different." ■

Searching for Great Websites

CONGREGATIONS THAT THINK they have great websites are invited to submit their web addresses to a U.S.-based ministry that focuses on helping churches design their own eye-catching, comprehensive and effective websites.

"Our directory saves volunteer and staff webmasters many hours that would otherwise be spent scouring the Internet for ideas and inspiration," said David Gillaspey, the directory's editor and founder, in a press release. "We do this by gathering in one place 500 examples of top-quality church and parish websites."

Great Church Websites (www.greatchurchwebsites.org) is conducting its annual search for great websites from around the world as a means of updating its inventory. Most are currently from the U.S, but the website does include a couple from Alberta.

"It is our goal to make the directory truly international as well as multicultural and multilingual," said Gillaspey.

The directory, which was launched in 2004, includes reduced-size screenshots of home pages for easy browsing by registered members. In addition, many—and eventually all—of the entries will include editors' comments about the site in general, and notes about well-executed features. Users can search the directory by keyword or phrase, church or parish location, or by phrases that describe the home page in some way. The site also lists design tips, includes a directory of web designers, and hosts a discussion forum so congregations can chat with others about their web design and maintenance issues.

Suggestions should be sent to suggestions@greatchurchwebsites.org and must include church name, location (city and region), and web address. ■

Orangeville Church says Farewell to Fallen Soldier



A CANADIAN SOLDIER who was killed in Afghanistan was returned to Orangeville, Ont., in May. Cpl. Matthew McCully's funeral was held at Tweedsmuir Memorial Presbyterian Church, led by Rev. Harvey Self and Mjr. Doug Friesen, a CFB Petawawa chaplain. About 750 people paid their final respects.

"It's happening very close to home," said Self, who served as a military chaplain in Petawawa for 10 years before joining Tweedsmuir. Self is also the chaplain for the local Royal Canadian Legion, which provided care for the McCully family after their loss. "Even though Matthew didn't go to our church, he was part of the community that our people are a part of."

Self told the *Record* that McCully went to the high school that many church members' children also attend, and his sister lives just a block from the church.

The 25-year-old McCully, who joined the Canadian Forces five years ago and was based at CFB Petawawa, was killed by a bomb near Kandahar while training Afghan soldiers. He was the 55th Canadian soldier killed in Afghanistan since 2002.

"What Matt was doing was what he believed was best for his country and family," said Cpl. Sandy Gauthier, who served with McCully, as reported in *The Orangeville Banner*. "He had the ability to bring out the best in all of us as a soldier and as a friend."

"It's a wonderful contribution when our church can work so closely with the community to offer support," said Self. "There's a strong Presbyterian tradition of supporting our military's members, and I think that's important." ■ *–AM*

Mission Team Attacked

TEN MEMBERS OF DALLAS'S HIGHLAND Park Presbyterian Church were ambushed and robbed by four armed bandits while on a mission trip to Kenya in August. Three of the 10 members were kicked and punched by men armed with rifles and a machete. The group was travelling through remote jungle northeast of Nairobi on the way to install an irrigation system when they were accosted.

The men ordered the team members to turn over their cameras, cell phones and money, as they rifled through their belongings and forced them to lie on their stomachs. A passing truck scared the bandits away, enabling the team to get to safety. No one was seriously injured.

"I truly believe my faith protected me while I was there," said church elder Jon Phillips in a story in *The Dallas Morning News*. "That is what I am called to do."

Church members said it was the first time in 20 years of mission trips that they have had any trouble. ■ *–Presbyterian News Service and The Dallas Morning News*

Covenant Renewed



THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH was one of eight denominations to sign a covenant with Canada's First Nations at a ceremony in Winnipeg on National Aboriginal Day, June 21st. The renewed covenant acknowledges and celebrates the positive examples of cooperation between churches and First Nations since the covenant was signed for the first time in 1987.

The covenant was formally reaffirmed in March, but the summer ceremony was chosen as "an appropriate occasion for the churches to publicly recommit to the gospel values of the New Covenant," said Stephen Allen, the PCC's associate secretary for Justice Ministries, and responsible for the church's healing and reconciliation programs.

The original covenant was a response to constitutional talks between government and Aboriginal leaders about the rights of First Nations in Canada. The recognition and protection of aboriginal self-government was deemed vital, and the covenant formally voiced the churches' support for this right.

In its renewed form, churches recognized that many agreements and treaties of the past have been ignored, asking for a new call to action. By signing this covenant, the churches not only agreed to the right to self-government for Aboriginal Peoples, but also the right to be distinct, the right to an adequate land base, and the right to self-determination. Lori Ransom, healing and reconciliation animator, and Moderator Hans Kouwenberg were on hand for the event, as were numerous First Nations organizations.

"The 1987 covenant could have been filed away, but the signing churches and KAIROS are making a real effort to ensure this document is not forgotten," said Allen. "Signing the covenant 20 years later challenges us to try and live up to the values and principles expressed in the covenant." ■ *–AM*

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Minister guilty of same-sex marriages

IN A REVERSAL OF A LOWER CHURCH court ruling, Rev. Jane Adams Spahr has been found guilty of violating The Presbyterian Church (USA)'s constitutional ban on same-sex marriage by performing weddings for two lesbian couples.

According to the Presbyterian News Service, the Synod of the Pacific's Permanent Judicial Commission (PJC) ruled 6-2 that while the long-time Presbyterian minister "acted with conscience and conviction," her actions were at odds with the church's constitution.

The August decision of the synod tribunal overturned last year's ruling by the Presbytery of the Redwoods' PJC, which determined Spahr acted within her rights marrying two lesbian couples in 2004 and 2005.

The PC(USA)'s *Book of Order* defines marriage as between a man and a woman, and church courts have ruled that Presbyterian ministers may not utilize the marriage liturgy in same-sex ceremonies. The decision does not affect Spahr's ordination, but could lead to further discipline if she continues to perform wedding ceremonies for same-sex couples. Spahr said she will appeal to General Assembly.–*Presbyterian News Service*

Lost Pilgrims Launch New CD

BY AMY MACLACHLAN



THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH'S very own Lost Pilgrims have just released a CD. The self-titled debut is a mix of folk, country gospel, bluegrass and old rock, with covers of people like Neil Young, Bob Dylan, Elvis Costello and Hoagie Carmichael.

"It's very exciting for us to have some of our favourite tunes on CD," said Rev. Hugh Donnelly. "These are stories we love to share, and it's rewarding for us to be able to have them heard between gigs by willing ears!"

The band first met at Presbyterian Music Camp in Muskoka, and five years ago decided they liked playing together so much that they should try going beyond the camp setting. In addition to Donnelly, who plays guitar and mandolin, and is minister at Beaches, Toronto, the band consists of Scott Cooper (banjo and mandolin, and clerk of session at St. Andrew's, Port Credit), David Linderman (guitar, whistle, fife and mandolin), and Rev. Stephen Kendall (bass, and the church's principal clerk). Earlier this year, the band met John Dymond, bass player with Blackie and the Rodeo Kings, who agreed to produce their CD—something fans had been asking for.

"We picked up the finished product at the end of August and are delighted with it," said Kendall. "Each of us brings songs we love to the group and together we work out the arrangements in our own style. It's hard to describe our music, but it's easily accessible to a wide variety of tastes."

"We don't like to be referred to as The Lost Pilgrims," said Donnelly, "but only as Lost Pilgrims; after all, we are only four of the multitude of lost (and found) souls on this pilgrimage through life."

The band has played in churches, art galleries, folk clubs and pubs about once a month over the past couple of years. To learn more about Lost Pilgrims, to order their CD, or to request a booking, visit www.lostpilgrims.ca. ■



minister position now available

Westminster Presbyterian Church is seeking an ordained Minister. Our growing church of over 200 members and adherents, located in Scarborough Ontario, is seeking a dynamic personality with a strong ability to empathize with, and foster the diverse cultures within our congregation. This person must be able to:

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Please submit resume to: Rev. Ann Blanc (Interim Moderator) c/o of St David's Presbyterian Church, 1300 Danforth Road, Scarborough Ont, M1J 1E6. Phone no 416 287-7897 or Email: st.davids@bellnet.ca

A Call for Peace in Afghanistan

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH is one of 12 signatories to a letter sent to the Prime Minister of Canada in August, urging the government to "focus on enhancing protection of vulnerable Afghans rather than on aggressive engagement with insurgents.

"As churches," the letter states, "we are committed to protecting human life, promoting human dignity, working for justice, practicing forgiveness, and building peace and reconciliation."

The letter came from the Canadian Council of Churches, of which the PCC is a member. It is the council's contribution to the dialogue in Canada on moving Afghanistan towards a long-lasting peace. Rev. Dr. Hans Kouwenberg, moderator of this year's General Assembly, signed on behalf of the Presbyterian Church.

The church leaders call for a focus on truth and reconciliation in "a culturally appropriate process embraced by Afghan civil society." They also want increased diplomacy, including "discussions with Taliban insurgents willing to participate in peaceful negotiations." Support for fostering a greater respect for human rights, strengthening just governance, greater investments in reconstruction and development, and focusing security efforts on advancing the safety and well-being of Afghanistan's people are also highlighted as areas that need attention.

"It is important for the church to be on the public record, otherwise we risk being on the sideline and watching history pass us by instead of being faithfully engaged in the world," said Stephen Allen, associate secretary of Justice Ministries for the PCC. "The letter does not presume that those churches that signed the letter have all the answers to a complex and painful issue.

"There will be opportunities for the churches to become involved in public conversations about Canada's role in Afghanistan. This letter is a step in being part of these discussions."

Allen noted that Canada's military engagement in Afghanistan is the first time since the Korean conflict that Canadian troops have been in a combat mission.

"In a democratic society, individuals and institutions have rights and responsibilities. Our responsibilities include contributing to discussions on vital public matters." ■ *–AM with files from the CCC*

Peace and Security Intern Announced



THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA and Project Ploughshares have chosen Adam Parsons for an eight-month internship at the Ploughshares offices in Waterloo, Ont. The internship is the first in a three-year partnership between the two bodies.

"My passion for my field of study and my faith makes this internship an ideal opportunity for me," Parsons told the *Record*. "I can utilize and cultivate the skills I have developed in my academic, professional and faith-based life. I am extremely fortunate to have been selected." Parsons is a member of Gale, Elmira, Ont., and has an MA in International Relations.

The Peace and Human Security Internship Program, funded by the PCC's undesignated bequests, provides an opportunity for a Presbyterian who is a recent graduate to work in an ecumenical setting and to learn how Project Ploughshares and sponsoring churches are addressing peace challenges. For more information about the internship program, please contact Justice Ministries at national offices. ■ *–AM with files from Justice Ministries*

BUILDING HOPE

Although we still have $300,000 to raise towards our goal of $2.3 million, it's time to pause and say a heartfelt **"Thank you"**. Your many generous donations have helped to build **Anishinabe Place of Hope**, a transitional housing project for individuals who seek to begin a new life.

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Thank you to each and every one of you.

"There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven. A time to heal...and a time to build."
Ecclesiastes 3: vs. 1, vs. 3

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Code for conversion

WCC—Three major Christian bodies are supporting a code of conduct to guide activities seeking converts to Christianity. The World Evangelical Alliance recently joined the World Council of Churches and the Vatican in supporting the code at an August consultation in France. The code is expected to be finalized by 2010.

Leaders spoke of the need for an ecumenically-oriented and ethical approach that respects the right of the faithful of any religion to their beliefs, and expresses that no one religion has a monopoly on truth. It was also noted that the code should express "repentance for past wrongdoings so as to make clear that the superiority mentality in regard to other religions has been overcome."

Promoters expect the code to be an advocacy tool in discussions with governments considering anti-conversion laws, to help to advance the cause of religious freedom, address other religions' concerns about Christian proselytism, and also help to ease intra-Christian tensions.

A job well done

ENI—Malawi's largest Protestant church's outgoing general secretary has declared himself "very satisfied" with his attempts to stem membership losses.

Officials from the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Blantyre Synod, announced in August that Rev. McDonald Kadawati will replace Rev. Daniel Gunya, appointed in 1999.

After the Roman Catholic Church, the CCAP is the second-largest denomination in Malawi, where 80 percent of the 13.6 million people are Christian.

Church officials have noted that Gunya's accomplishments include the formation of a human rights wing of the church and the acceptance of women as pastors. The synod currently has five ordained women ministers, with six more women undergoing training at the Zomba Theological College in southern Malawi.

Norway's Christians, Muslims agree to conversion protocol

ENI—The Islamic Council of Norway and the (Lutheran) Church of Norway Council on Ecumenical and International Relations jointly declared in August that everyone is free to adopt the religious faith of their choice.

"As far as we know, this is the first time that a church and a national Muslim organization have jointly acknowledged the right to covert," said Olav Fykse Tveit, secretary general of the church council.

The two groups said in a statement, "We denounce and are committed to counteracting all violence, discrimination and harassment inflicted in reaction to a person's conversion, or desire to convert, from one religion to another, be it in Norway or abroad."

About 86 percent of Norway's 4.6 million people are members of the state (Lutheran) Church of Norway, while there are about 72,000 registered Muslims. Many interpretations of Islamic law forbid conversion from Islam, and it can have severe consequences in some countries, including the death penalty.

Youth find happiness in God and family

ENI—A survey by The Associated Press and MTV has found that religion and family are two of the strongest components contributing to the happiness of youth aged 13 to 24 in the United States.

"It's easier for kids who are happy and have things going well in their life to find the time and energy to participate in religion," Lisa Pearce, co-principal investigator for the National Study of Youth and Religion, was quoted as saying by AP.

The survey of 1,280 people found that 80 percent of those who call religion or spirituality the most important thing in their lives say they are happy, while of those who say faith isn't important to them, 60 percent consider themselves happy.

Pearce said the relationship between religion and happiness may depend on the individual's experiences. "It could be kids who have bad experiences in church end up leaving and being unhappy with religion," she noted.

Spending time with family was the top answer to the open-ended question, "What brings you happiness?" Next was spending time with friends, followed by time with a significant other person.

Series on fundamentalism gets lukewarm U.S. reviews

ENI—A look at religious zealots in Christianity, Judaism and Islam is receiving worldwide media coverage, but lukewarm reviews from U.S. television critics.

Global broadcaster CNN has aired three two-hour programs titled *God's Warriors*, which examines fundamentalists in the world's three largest religions.

The series interviewed evangelical Christian Rev. Jerry Falwell a week before his death, looks at American Christians who are raising large sums of money to support the activities of Jewish settlers in the occupied West Bank, explores the roots of conflict between Shiites and Sunnis, and tries to explain why devout Muslims are willing to die for a cause.

Reuters' staed: "What [the series] doesn't do—and what needs to be done—is to point out the contrasts among these groups. Do they all have the same strength within their religions? Do they receive support, tacit or otherwise, from governments? Do they plan to achieve their aims peacefully?" ■

Peace, Love & Understanding

The war in Afghanistan exposes our own struggles.

BY ANDREW FAIZ

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me. –Matthew 25: 35, 36

The war in Afghanistan is not front-page news there; it is, after all, isolated in two southern provinces, though its reach is felt elsewhere. The lead stories in Afghanistan are about the drought, lack of infrastructure and political machinations. There are stories about the awful roads and the struggle to build schools and hospitals. In short, they are local stories of local interest; and Afghans are engaged in them and discuss them openly. Not to say they aren't interested in the Taliban or the NATO troops; they are seen in context of the more immediate and demanding issues facing the nation.

In Canada the story of Afghanistan is filtered through the presence of troops who are fighting the Taliban along with NATO forces. The "war" is over-reported by our media, which is seemingly embedded with the troops in conflict zones; though we don't like to think of them that way, particularly those journalists working for our national broadcaster. Each political party in Ottawa uses each soldier's death in Kandahar to promote its own ideology. Meanwhile the public debate has degenerated into the usual one of defining our Canadian identity: are we peacemakers or warmongers? Are we for the troops or against them? Are we imperialists? Are we American lapdogs? This excuse for public discourse is pathetic in a uniquely Canadian way.

As Christians we too struggle to define ourselves and have fallen into a similar trap, as we discuss ideas of peace and love and of ecumenism and inter-faith relations. This was most sharply seen in a letter sent in August by the Canadian Council of Churches to Prime Minister Stephen Harper. Rev. Karen Hamilton, general secretary of the CCC, said in a press release: "Canadian churches have consistently called on the Canadian government to build peace with the people of Afghanistan rather than pursue a war on terror, to employ all diplomatic means to achieve that end including engaging civil society and religious networks, and to direct the effort of the Canadian Forces to the protection of lives and the preservation of civilian infrastructure."

I too am struggling to define my response to the struggles in Afghanistan, where I met people whom I could honestly describe as victims of circumstance and forethought. Part of my struggle bumps into comments like the council's: "war of terror" is a code referring to American imperialism; most of the Canadian casualties have happened as a result of preserving "civilian infrastructure" that is rife with land mines and other bombs. Canada is working with the people and the government of Afghanistan but the battle is against insurgent forces, which apply guerrilla tactics. None of the people I met in Afghanistan have any love for the Taliban, but then I saw only a part of the country. And how does one engage in diplomatic relations with a group of ideological extremists? As my daddy used to say, "It's easier said than done."

And, Canada, through its churches, aid agencies and government agencies is engaging in civil society. Church organizations are actively involved in providing succour, in the name of Christ. Our own PWS&D has taken brave leadership in many parts of Afghanistan; and we are rightly proud of them. They provide much of what the council seeks, and they manage it through partnership with federal institutions like the Canadian International Development Agency. It is part of the multi-tiered response our country represents; and is largely ignored in the public discourse.

But the support provided by aid agencies is at best palliative. An effective solution depends on the status of the Taliban. And this is where I and (I think) the council struggle in defining ourselves as Christian. (To be fair, despite the overstatement in the press release, much of what I've argued is equivocated in the council's letter.)

Nick Lowe once famously asked in a song, "What's so funny 'bout peace, love & understanding?" Nothing, of course, but they, like all other rights, are not free. There is a price to pay. Civil society isn't just something that happens out of good intentions and the right policies. Failure to pay that price leads to vacuous rhetoric and the hollow feeling inside that constantly begs, "Who am I?" ■

Afghanistan: dusty hope

Rebuilding the crumbling infrastructure is key to country's peace





I can't keep up with Sayed Ahmad. His compact wiry body is constantly on the move, driven to do something good in his beloved land. He has lived his 50-something years here in the province of Bamiyan, Afghanistan. He watched the Soviets enter in the early 80's, then the Mujahadin and then the Taliban. He watched two massive 1,500-year-old Buddhas bombed into oblivion by the Taliban; he watched friends, neighbours, relatives arrested and murdered; he has watched his own community, his people, slowly disintegrate through 30 years of war and then drought.

And so on this spring morning he walks with urgency across the seemingly endless sandstone landscape around Bamiyan. Ahmad is director of the Bamiyan branch of Centre for Cooperation in Afghanistan, which was an underground force during the Taliban years. The centre is sponsored by Church World Services, a Switzerland-based non-governmental agency, with offices in Islamabad and Kabul. Presbyterian World Service and Development works with CWS to provide food, shelter and economic development projects in both countries. We are following a pair of schoolteachers through many villages and back alleys, as they try to find students to attend their programming.

The teachers find children playing or working and follow them home where they get the parents to agree to send them for schooling. The parents invariably believe that education is a good idea, in theory, but not for their child, who is needed to do chores. And, Ahmad is there, gently cajoling, supporting his teachers, never in the way, and yet never out of the picture.

"The story of Afghanistan today falls into three parts: before the Taliban, after the Taliban and during the Taliban," he had told me the previous day. "Before the Taliban were the Soviets and the Mujahadin. The Soviets caused a lot of damage. They bombarded schools, infrastructure, arrested the educated and skilled workers. After Russia, the Mujahadin also killed people, and by different names brought language discrimination, ethnic discrimination, they rocketed villages and there was lots of door-to-door fighting. Both Russia and the Mujahadin destroyed the economy. They destroyed the psychological system of the country.

"There was loss of hope, loss of relatives, loss of property and loss of hope for life."

Sayed Ahmad is driven to restore what was lost.

KABUL IS A DUSTBOWL SURROUNDED BY snow-capped mountains. It was once a jewel in the Hindu-Kush, a vacationing destination, a honeymoon spot. Today, you need steel binding in your spine to survive the roads. From the airport at



Since she can get neither water nor sewage in her home, she has to go where she can find them. Which often means alleys in a teeming complex, like this one in Kabul.

the edge of the city to where I was staying in the middle of the city, there was one stretch of approximately 100 metres that was fully paved. The rest was horribly potholed, or just plain raw.

When Church World Services opened offices here in 2004 they had to bring all furnishings in from Pakistan—desks, chairs, computers, cabinets could not be found in Kabul. The city has grown some since then. I saw one car and one home appliance dealership. In the absence of hardwired phone service, cell phones and wireless are ubiquitous—you can buy cell phone cards on the street; along with foreign currency. Even from the remoteness of Bamiyan I was able to phone home everyday using a cheap cell phone.

There are public schools—not many and not well serviced, but they do exist, and are open to girls as well. Kids go to school in shifts because there aren't enough teachers, desks and rooms: public school in the morning; middle school in the late morning; and teens in the afternoon. I was told that tens of thousands of students had applied this year to Kabul University for only a few thousand seats.

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There is a simple and basic lack of infrastructure. There are very few signs of a middle class, with that portion of the population replaced by foreign non-governmental agencies. Their vehicles—4x4s, Land Rovers—dominate the roads the way their agencies dominate the city. The most common symbol I saw was the blue "UN" on cars and buildings; followed by the red cross and the red crescent (the Muslim Red Cross). The American Agency for International Development has a large presence, as does the Aga Khan Foundation (a branch of which has built one of its signature Serena hotels in Kabul; basic rooms start at $200 US). My flight from Islamabad was filled with aid workers (and a dollop of diplomats). They are working as advisors to the struggling government of President Hamid Karzai; they are developing programs for women, for youths, for economic development, for food, for education.

This, however, creates a false economy servicing the aid community. There are some nice restaurants and pubs. I had dinner at a French restaurant, where I was served a potable glass of wine. For one purchase, I negotiated the price in American dollars and then paid in Pakistani rupees and local afghanis. I could also have used yens, yuans or euros. But don't be fooled by this cosmopolitanism. This is a developing country, in the most basic definition. The town of Bamiyan looks like something out of the Wild West—dirt roads, wooden buildings, lean, hungry residents. Below the thin veneer of cell phones, SUVs and international currency is a people with needs and very few means.

Three decades ago Afghanistan was considered an enlightened and progressive Muslim nation. A benign young king, Mohammed Zahir Shah, introduced sweeping reforms in 1964. Within a decade the king's cousin had taken power and revoked the constitution. In another five years, he too was gone and replaced by the Communist party. The Soviet Union invaded in 1979, entering Kabul on Christmas Day. Their presence ushered in a geopolitical game: a curious union of bedfellows comprising the United States, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Each with its own concern, financed and assisted rebels (Mujahadin) to fight the Soviets. Amongst the non-Afghans involved in this fighting, in his case for the preservation of an Islamic nation, was a wealthy businessman named Osama bin Laden. He would go on to found an organization called al-Qaeda. The Soviets pulled out in 1989, and lost control of Afghanistan in 1992 to the Mujahadin, led by Ahmed Shah Massoud. (Massoud would later lead the fight against the rise of the Taliban and was assassinated on September 9, 2001. He is considered a hero and a martyr in Afghanistan.)

Ahmad wastes few words describing this period. "The Mujahadins, with Tajiks they destroyed houses of the Hazara; with Hazara they destroyed Tajiks. They made violence against other tribes. These painful events are out of my language to fully tell the story."

By 2000 the Taliban, a group of scholars and intellectuals who interpret Islam through a severe fundamentalism, had grown out of the southern province of Kandahar to rule most of the country. They saw education, ecumenism, interfaith relations and non-compliance as unacceptable to their Allah. They were willing to punish, banish or kill anyone who crossed their self-defined lines. This included two silent but powerful 61-metre Buddhas that had been carved as part relief, part sculpture centuries earlier in the Bamiyan valley. The statues were deemed craven images of false gods.









1. Eleven graves on a family compound keep the dead amongst the living.

2. These women travelled several miles over some steep topography to fill those jugs.

3. A creek once ran under that bridge. A fetid river is about a mile away.

4. In a rare reversal this boy followed school teachers hoping they would take him with them.

Once part of a great Buddhist empire that extended across the Indian subcontinent (millennia-old temples are still being excavated in northern Pakistan), Afghanistan has been a Muslim country for more than 800 years. It has a very long and honourable history of tolerance.

"No one was safe from the Taliban," says Ahmad. "They were killing everybody. People left their houses and their property. They left for the mountains, for Iran or Pakistan.

"The Taliban were mostly Kandahari but they were mostly foreigners—Chechans, Pakistani, Saudi, Chinese.

"One day the Taliban killed 300 people over 11 hours. There was a 17-year-old getting married and the family pleaded for him. But the Taliban killed him in front of the family. He was the only son.

"The Buddhas were not even men," notes Ahmad. "They were only stone and they blasted them.

"There was so much killing there was no one left to bury the dead. Muslims use a white cloth for burial but there was no cloth left. The women would collect the dead. There was no one to pray over the bodies.

"And then there was the drought. There were no rains, no water. People would escape to the mountains with their animals and then the animals would die. They lost everything."

Ahmad was arrested once. Fifty people were left in one room for three days with only water. And then released. He escaped to another part of Bamiyan. "There was no hope. Bamiyan was dead."

I met a family that had 11 graves on its compound; a very common story in Bamiyan. Go to a high place and look across endless kilometers of barren sandstone and you will see lots of makeshift flags—coloured bits of cloth tied to sticks. Each flag marks a grave, each grave that of somebody killed, most likely by the Taliban, but also by the Soviets or the Mujahadin. These are memory markers for a people who are very much connected to their families, their cultural heritage and their land. In one conversation a group of men (it's always men, the women are hidden from view, certainly my view) recited an endless list of atrocities. I present them here not judging their veracity but as an expression of the psychological state of the people I met: In one day, they told me, 1,400 people were killed by Russians in Laghman province; in one day 10,000 Uzbeks, Hazara and Tajiks [three of the many ethnic groups in Afghanistan] were killed by the Taliban in the town of Mazar-i-Sharif; in Chomadi more than 1,000 were killed by the Taliban; also in Mazar-i-Sharif, 8,000 Taliban were killed by NATO forces during the collapse. (Since these oral testimonies did not come with dates it is hard to track them down. I tried, and found some evidence from an Amnesty International inquiry and a CBC report that the stories, while exaggerated, do have some truth. I accept the numbers as respect for the dead, for the past.)

Those 11 flags on the compound keep that family whole, as uncles, aunts, mothers, fathers, cousins, grandparents coexist with the past, along with their cattle and their traditions, on a hundred square metres or so. They live in the same sort of houses they have for centuries—mud and straw, sun-baked, half-metre-thick walls, cooled or heated with dung patties as needed, with a few small rooms where people eat, sleep, cook and chat. A few modern conveniences have crept in: cell phones, satellite television and spotty electricity. But these new currents don't affect the traditions.

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AND WHILE THE DEATHS ACCUMULATED DURING THE TALIBAN years, the rains stopped in 14 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces, including Bamiyan. Too busy dodging bullets, the locals didn't pay proper attention to the drought. They picked vegetation as needed, even though there was less of it each year. They inadvertently stripped bare all root systems, so even if there was a flash storm (for half an hour or so) nothing holds the water. Locals pointed to bare sandy hills and insisted they were once verdant. It was hard to believe; but turn your head in the opposite direction and there's a little bridge over sand. There must have been a creek there once.

The drought forced more people onto the refugee track, an endless stream of the desperate willing to live in cramped camps, in canvas tents, because, if nothing else, they get food. (It is estimated that over three million Afghans left the country for Pakistan and Iran.) And those who remained spend up to four hours a day walking to a diminishing river that runs through the Bamiyan valley. Every day, by foot or by donkey, filling cans to the brim, to feed, wash, cook for themselves and their boney, meatless cattle. The water-gathering task is often given to the children and women. Six- to 10-year-olds spend their day









1. The largest of the destroyed Buddhas was a feat of engineering and craftsmanship. Those holes open to various temples around, above and behind where the statue once stood.

2. Sayed Ahmad

3. A school teacher talks to dad about his daughter.

4. A Bamiyan boy.

carrying water cans many times their weight.

And that is why the schoolteachers, funded through Ahmad's agency, are scouring the Bamiyan valley, looking for children to teach. And that is why they meet so much resistance—the children are integral to the economic viability of the struggling peasants. And that is why Sayed Ahmad is restless; he knows education is a powerful tool that will save his nation.

One of the teachers for the program is named Zahra; and when I first met her I told her I had a daughter with the same name. I proudly pulled out a photograph from my wallet, of a five-year-old girl in a sundress running carelessly through a front yard. Zahra, the teacher, stared at my child's picture for many minutes, passing it on to the other teachers, each staring at it as if this child were from another planet. I became uncomfortable waiting for them to return the photo. (Often when you share a child's photo with others they look at it for a few seconds, coo some appropriate words and pass it back.) A child like the one they were staring at did not exist in their world.

His recipe for Afghanistan is simple, and one that was repeated to me often by others: beat back the Taliban, stabilize the government, provide greater access to education, encourage investment and rebuild the infrastructure. His country desperately needs 25 years of peace to undo the past quarter century. And remarkably, despite what he has lived through, he is hopeful for the future

ABDUL WAKIL SHERGUL TOLD me education has never been a priority in Afghanistan. I met him at the Bamiyan airport (a fancy name for a dirt strip and a few shacks). Like so many Afghans whom I met, he invited me to lunch. I met him at his offices at The United Nations High Commission for Refugees where he has worked for two decades. Over lunch—rice, meat, flat bread, fruit, cola and cigarettes—he told me his story. He is in his 50s. As a boy he taught himself his numbers and a few letters by looking at the family Koran. He wanted to get an education but his father was adamantly against it. A cousin sneaked him into the school and lied to cover Shergul's presence. Within a month the dad had stormed the school and pulled his son. The next year, the cousin did it again, bribing the teacher to hide Shergul when the dad came by. Finally Shergul's father relented.

Abdul Shergul is rare in his country: a member of the minority middle class. He remained in Afghanistan because, as he readily admits, he was lucky enough to work with the UN early on as a communications officer at the UNHCR. One of his sons had a similar position with Hamid Karzai's government, but has recently become an advisor. Shergul dreams of opening a school in his native village after he retires. And like many other Afghans I met, he has great sympathy with Karzai and the fledgling government. He believes in Karzai's sincerity and agrees steps have been taken in the right direction. But the rest of the cabinet is a collection of governors from the 34 provinces—ancient rivalries, petty politics, local concerns, hidden agendas, blatant jealousy and ambition overwhelm the national issues.

His recipe for Afghanistan is simple, and one that was repeated to me often by others: beat back the Taliban, stabilize the government, provide greater access to education, encourage investment and rebuild the infrastructure. His country desperately needs 25 years of peace to undo the past quarter century. And remarkably, despite what he has lived through, he is hopeful for the future.

Hope is the one theme I returned to continuously, especially with Nejabat Khan Safi, the one person I spent the most amount of time with during my week in Afghanistan. He is Assistant Disaster Response Coordinator of Church World Service, Afghanistan. I spoke to him in Urdu and he spoke to me in English as both of us used each other to practice our language skills.

Safi is a proud Afghan, a devout Muslim and traditional in his outlook. He grew up in a neighbouring country, where he lived, studied and worked in an Afghan bubble. He is precisely the person that the UNHCR is hoping to attract back. Still, the struggles inside of Nejabat Khan Safi are the real struggles within his native country. And that was why for a week, in English and Urdu, we carefully parsed the word hope.

Safi was born in 1974, just at the beginning of the troubles. His father was a senior bureaucrat. When the Soviets arrived, the family was forced to flee. They began walking towards the Pakistani border. Along the way their father got very sick after drinking water from a fetid pond used by animals. The father begged the family to leave him behind to die. Safi, who was eight and the eldest of three kids, made the decision that they should all live or die together.

They settled finally in a refugee camp outside of Mansehra, Pakistan. Extended family lent them a tent,

which was reclaimed a few months later. The family built a lean-to and lived there for a while. Finally an aid organization provided them with their own tent and Safi describes that as a proud day for the family.

He went to primary school in Mansehra, later moving to an Afghan boarding school in Peshawar, Pakistan, where he also attended an Afghan university. He got a degree in civil engineering, but there was no work available in that field. He returned to Mansehra and taught in a high school. He began working for aid agencies.

The buzzword in the NGO community is "capacity building," which means teaching the locals to build and run their infrastructure—government, civil service, army, police, schools, etc. Safi's "capacity" is well developed—he understands and promotes, through the various projects he administers, Western ideas of equity and access—but the issues he struggles with are not straightforward. He is married to a woman who cannot read or write, because his generation of Afghan women did not receive education. He has two "tween" sisters who are unschooled, because his father (like Shergul's, a generation earlier) does not believe that women should be educated. He would like to send his own son to school but is afraid for his safety because kidnappers assume any child going to school must come from a monied family. Horrific stories of kidnapped children are common on Afghan news.

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Safi teaches his wife to read and write, and does the same surreptitiously for his sisters. He also has a daughter for whom he wishes the brightest future. He is the sole breadwinner for his family, which in traditional Afghan fashion extends beyond the merely nuclear, including his siblings and parents. They are in Afghanistan because he got a job at a Christian-based aid agency.

He has incredible compassion and patience for traditions—our conversation was filled with discussion of Afghan customs. But it wasn't till we spoke as fathers that our conversation became darkly personal. By choice he has no ticket out of Afghanistan, but he would consider it for his children. When he hears stories of children in the West, like mine, he wonders if it wouldn't be better to leave, to begin again in a world not eviscerated by history. Nejabat Safi is torn between being an Afghan and a father. He sees his own life as a bridge to some future which he has not yet properly defined. He exists only to serve that future. And, in response I present the only effectual tool I have: my prayers that his children find the peace they deserve.

MONTHS AFTER MY RETURN I MET A CANADIAN SOLDIER, about half my age, who had done a tour of duty in Kandahar. We had seen different parts of Afghanistan and we compared notes. We agreed that Afghans were absolutely wonderful people—warm, giving, open. He told me he believed all they needed was a prolonged period of peace, so they could rebuild their country. He said he was eager to get back; that there was something he loved about that place, but he couldn't define it for me.

Our conversation took me back to Afghanistan and I was emotionally overwhelmed once more. I have never felt so helpless and hopeless as I did after my first day in Bamiyan. I had met people who had been beaten senseless by circumstance and there was nothing I could do to relieve their hunger or their pain immediately. While at the same time I saw the incremental hopefulness propelling Shergul, Safi and Ahmad. These three Muslims taught me a lot about hope and the power of faith.

That is where Afghanistan exists, between its crumbling infrastructure and its hope for a peaceful future. Some of that depends on the Taliban in Kandahar, which is where the fighting is. The presence is relatively small but it has a huge psychological weight in the country. The outcome of that fighting directs the nation, and Afghans look longingly to their government to lead the way. At the same time, they are practical people and they turn to aid agencies to fix the infrastructure.

Like that soldier I too have left a piece of myself in Afghanistan. And like him I struggle to define it. It wasn't merely pathos but, perhaps, its direct opposite: a palpable hopefulness. Or perhaps that sense of urgency, the physical immediacy which I saw Sayed Ahmad, Abdul Wakil Shergul and Nejabat Khan Safi wrap around themselves every morning. ■

Andrew Faiz is the managing editor of the Presbyterian Record. *More photographs and videos of Afghanistan can be seen on our website.*

PWSDevelopments

The official newsletter of
Presbyterian World Service & Development

October 2007 edition

PWS&D is the development, relief and refugee agency of The Presbyterian Church in Canada

Compassion after Conflict

Helping Guatemalans seek justice and hope

Speak out for those who cannot speak,
for the rights of all the destitute.

Proverbs 31:8

Guatemala is a nation struggling to move forward after years of civil war, crimes against human rights and high rates of violence. Presbyterian World Service & Development is working with partners to break cycles of poverty and create a future where children can grow up in peace and their dreams and aspirations can be fulfilled.

The civil war ended just over 10 years ago and Guatemala continues to struggle to strengthen civil society and overcome a history of violence, impunity and injustice that characterized years of military-led dictatorships. The indigenous Maya people were especially persecuted and victimized. Human rights abuses were rampant and poverty crippled the majority of the population.The war left behind high rates of distrust and violence. But hope remains.



Guatemala Today

The burden of poverty weighs heavily on the population of 12 million. Nearly 58 per cent of the people live in poverty; over half of these live in extreme poverty. The most affected areas are rural and former conflict zones of the northwest, which not coincidentally also have the highest concentration of the Maya people.

Although the armed conflict is long over, excessive amounts of weapons from the conflict, lack of economic opportunity and easy lure of drugs and other illicit trades fuel concerns about public security and development. Girls and women have been especially victimized and most cases remain unsolved. Guatemala has one of the highest violent crime rates in Latin America. Domestic violence, murders, and drug and gang related crime is extremely high.

Social services in Guatemala are among the worst in the hemisphere, with education and health services suffering the most. Guatemala's military budget remains one of the highest government

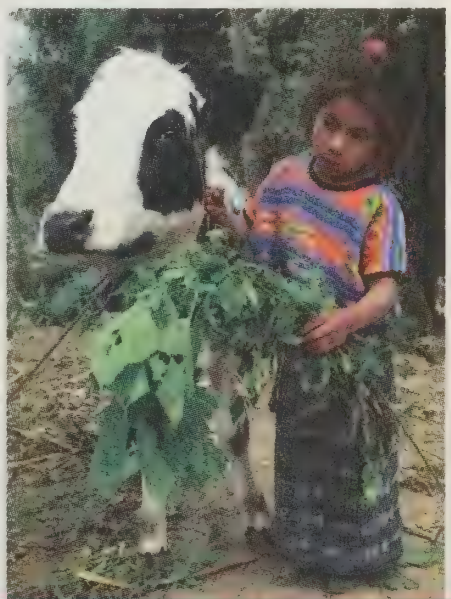


Created by the ReliefWeb Map Centre, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

expenditures, maintaining the largest standing army in the Central American region despite the absence of a foreign threat. The military has been widely cited for its involvement in the drug trade and other illegal activities.

The Maya People

The aboriginal people in Guatemala, the Maya people, make up approximately half the country's population.



Guatemala

The Maya people include many distinct populations, societies and ethnic groups who each have their own particular traditions, cultures and historical identity. There are at least 22 distinct Maya languages.

The war aggravated and deepened wounds with the indigenous community. The Maya suffered from massacres and victimization. Today, the country's five million Maya people continue to be isolated socially, economically and politically due to overt discrimination and geographic, cultural and linguistic barriers. Approximately 90 per cent of Maya women are illiterate.

PWS&D is working in Guatemala to:

- Provide children with an education to break free from poverty
- Improve the health of families by training volunteer midwives and nutritionists
- Support women through small income-generating projects
- Promote gender balances and improve the rights of women
- Empower Maya women to break out of cultural isolation through literacy training and improve their standard of living.

The Road to Hope

But there is compassion after the conflict. With the support of PWS&D, program partners in the country are actively working to change present conditions and create a new kind of future: one that includes enough food, water, education, health care, and most importantly, hope.

Through basic literacy training, Maya communities are slowly learning to speak Spanish, while breaking down cultural isolation, and girls are encouraged to advance beyond just a few years of primary education. These strategies work to maintain the rich Maya culture in a modern world and empower the entire community.

Program partners also work to address the issue of inadequate health care, training volunteer midwives and nutritionists to teach preventative health strategies. The result is a healthier population.

Programs receiving support from PWS&D provide loans and training in small business skills to groups of women who are now producing crafts to sell at local markets, starting vegetable gardens and other small ventures. This provides a source of income for their families, and is a significant step forward in improving their quality of life.

The Francisco Coll School is an important partner working with



PWS&D. The school is a small oasis built next to the garbage dump in the heart of Guatemala City. The schoo provides a safe learning environment for 300 children living in some of the most desolate conditions, and offers them the opportunity to receive education and care.

Children at the school receive a daily nutritious snack, school supplies such as pens, texts and notebooks, counselling and health check-ups. For those that need it, an after-school program is also available to reinforce basic reading skills. Children who excel at school are granted scholarships to continue their education beyond the primary level, giving them the opportunity to transcend the crime and poverty they grew up with.

In a country that has known years of war and conflict, PWS&D programs are part of the forces working for lasting peace.



Living with War

Finding hope for Afghanistan



Thus says the Lord: Act with justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor anyone who has been robbed.

Jeremiah 22:3

Afghans have faced a long history of turmoil, tragedy and devastation. Civilians have watched war rage for decades, destroying families, homes, livelihoods and futures. Power struggles have been frequent and ongoing with leaders exiled, killed and conquered. Warlords have dominated and revolts are common. Peace Accords come and go with little effect. According to the Human Development Index, over 71 per cent of the adult population is illiterate and the average life expectancy is 46 years. For thousands of families, life is about day-to-day survival. But in the battle for the future, forces of hope are actively working to change lives. Presbyterian World Service & Development is working with local partners to help bring peace and security to the people.

Long Years of War

From three British-Afghan wars taking place between 1839-1919, to political alignment with the USSR during the Cold War causing tensions with the US, Afghanistan has a tumultuous history. More recently, during the 1990s, militia's clashed and large-scale fighting took place across the country, resulting in thousands of civilian casualties and waves of displaced people and refugees.

Out of this chaos, the Taliban emerged. Their purpose was to evict the warlords, provide law and order, and enforce strict Islamic laws. As the warring continued, the Taliban seized more and more territory. The new rules they enforced further repressed the people and included harsh punishments such as stoning to death and amputations. They banished women from the public sphere, outlawed music and singing (except religious hymns) and forbade forms of entertainment such as theatre and cinema. Anti-Taliban movements rose up, but the Taliban continued to seize more power. In 1996, Afghanistan was in its 17th year of war and they had the highest infant, child and maternal mortality rates in Asia. Millions of landmines covered the terrain and there were two million refugees.

There seemed to be no end to the war and civil strife continued. Afghan civilians suffered from widespread poverty, intense drought, devastated infrastructure and the extensive use of landmines. By the end of 2000, the Taliban occupied 95 per cent of the country. They committed human rights violations, particularly directed against women and girls, and they forced religious minorities to wear tags to identify themselves as non-Muslims. Foreign aid workers were put on trial for promoting Christianity.



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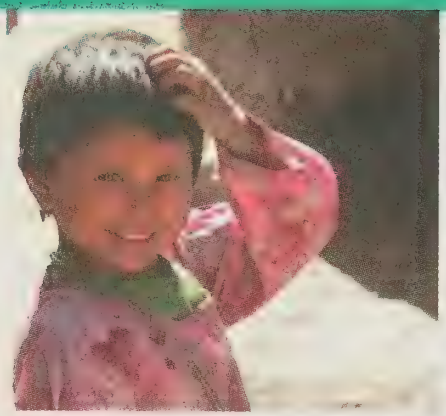
The First Steps to Change

In 2001, the Taliban regime finally ended. The UN sponsored a new

From Guatemala to Ghana, Pakistan to Peru, PWS&D is working around the world to share Christ's hope and love. To learn more visit www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd



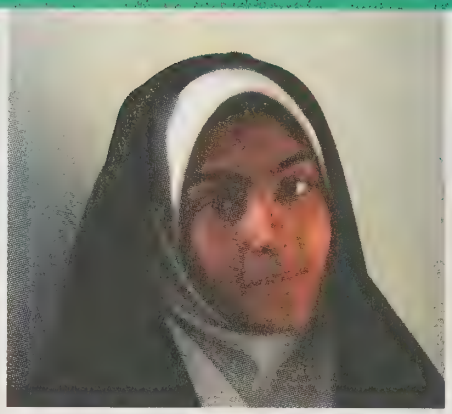
Afghanistan



political process to restore stability to Afghanistan and the first contingent of foreign peacekeepers arrived. Many Afghans hope that the future will bring peace and security.

While allied forces continued military campaigns against resistance efforts by al-Qaeda and Taliban forces in the southeast, the first nationwide presidential election took place in October 2004. Over eight million people, including women, voted.

Peace efforts in Afghanistan face countless challenges such as controlling the bandits that roam through rural sectors, removing the debris and landmines left by decades of civil war, extensive poverty, rebuilding the economy and defeating warlords. Political violence continues and bombs have targeted international peacekeepers. The Taliban resistance efforts are ongoing and war continues in the southern provinces.



Rebuilding the Future

PWS&D is working in the Hazarajat region in the north, in some of the most forgotten areas, helping rural families rebuild after years of war and overcome intense poverty. PWS&D is supporting programs to provide immediate food assistance and access to clean water. Long-term efforts focus on rebuilding water supplies to combat drought. A program for children focuses on developing their learning abilities, life management skills and focusing their behaviour on social cooperation and peace-building.

As innovative new programs make water more accessible to the people, vegetation will grow back and provide sustenance for livestock. The root systems from plants will help to hold the water and improve water tables. Families will no longer have to spend hours a day walking to fetch water and children will have the opportunity to go back to school.

PWS&D is working in Afghanistan to:

- Provide food packages for the most vulnerable families
- Supply livestock, feed and livestock vaccinations for farmers
- Restore clean water for those suffering from drought
- Help families rebuild their income generating activities
- Restore sheep herds for families forced to sell their livestock to get money for food.

It will be a long time before the problems of Afghanistan are solved, but PWS&D is working to make sure that for people living a world away, in a land crippled by long-term war and poverty, the future is something they can believe in. Despite the war, violence and turmoil, the hope of Christ knows no bounds.



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Companions on the Road

Tired, relieved, footsore and joyful, they broke bread together. BY KATIE MUNNIK

"We are pilgrims on a journey and companions on the road."
Richard Gillard, Brother, Sister, Let Me Serve You

Not all loaves of bread fit easily into a backpack. I discovered this when my husband Michael and I walked across Spain together, following the 1,000-year-old pilgrimage to the city of Santiago. When you're walking 25 kilometers a day you need to carry lunch with you. Most days, Michael strapped the bread to the outside of his backpack. Since my legs are shorter and I walk more slowly, it was my job to keep an eye on the loaf, ensuring that it remained firmly attached and more-or-less waterproofed.

Historically, pilgrims made this trek to visit the sacred relics of the Apostle James, for whom the town is named. Anyone who visited the site would be granted a compostela—an indulgence to speed their passage through purgatory and on to heaven. Today, pilgrims still receive the compostela on completing their walk, but few set out with that as their primary goal. The pilgrims we met along the way spoke instead of seeking time to reflect, to mull over life's large decisions or to think about endings and new beginnings. Some talked about seeking God or listening for His will; others spoke more vaguely, unsure of what they believed but looking for deeper meaning or new direction for their lives.

Several times a day, we would stop for a rest, perhaps in a small village bistro for a cup of café con leche or by the side of the path for a picnic lunch. Other pilgrims would drop their packs next to ours and we would chat about the walk behind us and compare directions for the route ahead. We shared stories, stamps, even money and especially food. At dinnertime, we gathered at communal tables, eating delicious meals that cost pocket change, with a bottle of wine to share and as much crusty bread as we ➤



could eat. These were meals to linger over, enjoying the feeling of being at rest and being together.

Along the pilgrimage, I often thought about the story of the Road to Emmaus. Two disciples, distraught after the crucifixion of Jesus, were travelling away from Jerusalem. Perhaps they were trying to put distance between the recent confusing past and whatever future might be ahead for them. On the road, they met a man who asked them about their journey. At first, they hesitated, not wishing to include him in their discussion. Their own reflections clouded their eyes so that they didn't see who spoke with them. But when they stopped for the evening meal and the man broke bread with them, they recognized him as Christ. And, in this recognition, life began anew for the disciples. They turned back to Jerusalem, where the new church was just beginning.

At the end of our Spanish ➤

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pilgrimage, we, like generations before us, attended a pilgrim mass in the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. There were so many people packed in for the service that there was only space to stand. Light poured in through the high ancient windows as we stood together—tired, relieved, footsore and joyful. We weren't able to eat the bread and drink the wine as part of the Catholic mass, but we felt deeply connected to those around us. They were quite literally our companions on the road. The word companion derives from the Latin for "one who breaks bread with another" from the roots *com* meaning together and *panis* meaning bread.

In the month it had taken us to walk to Santiago, many people had become our companions

As we stood in the crowded church, I looked around at the faces of so many fellow pilgrims we'd met along the way. In the month it had taken us to walk to Santiago, many people had become our companions. Together we'd shared meals and advice about blisters. We'd sat quietly in old churches and laughed on the road and sung late into the night. We'd talked about our lives easily, as if we'd known each other for years. And as the priests read out the names of the countries of all the pilgrims who had arrived since the last mass, it seemed as if the whole world was represented. In the crowded cathedral at the end of the long walk, I saw the promise of the community to come, the Kingdom feast with abundant bread for all. ■

Katie Munnik is the director of youth worship for the Presbytery of Ottawa, and a member of Knox, Ottawa.





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Taste it!

We digest the meaning of our faith through Communion. BY KEN CRAIGIE

O taste, and see that the Lord is good!

How often you have heard these words will depend on the frequency you have attended the celebration of Holy Communion/the Eucharist/the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Over time, traditions change, scripture tells us clearly and emphatically that the practice of the early church was to "break bread together weekly." In spite of the noble attempts by some reformers like Calvin, the Reformed church has not maintained the weekly practice.

In our Canadian experience, we recognize that we have inherited the Scottish traditions of quarterly and special times. Increasingly, communicators recognize the value of the experience of tasting and seeing that the Lord is good and that all learning is done through the ears of human experience. To do is to learn. Thus doing more often re-enforces the core beliefs of a faith dependant on the grace of God.

In our reflections about frequency, let us pause to remember what it is that we do and what it is that God does in this action.

First, let me be clear, that this sacrament is not now, nor ever was intended to be, a mere ritual of obedience to a legalistic belief about our goodness or deservedness. Frederick Buechner offers a helpful and mercifully non-technical definition of sacrament: "A sacrament is the breaking through of the sacred into the profane/common; a ritual is the ceremonial acting out of the profane/common in order to show it [our] sacredness. A sacrament is God offering his holiness to men/women; a ritual is men/women raising up the holiness of their humanity to God."

One might choose to abridge this even further; a sacrament is something God does; a ritual something we do. In baptism and communion, God is present and active; indeed, God is the primary actor. God is present and active throughout all creation, but God has specifically promised to be present to us in the sacraments.

"Communion, like baptism, has many meanings. Forgiveness, Christ's presence, penance, community, hunger, feeding, Christ's body and blood, memorial, and sustenance are among the many dimensions of the meal Christians share."—(*This Thing Called Church*) ➤

Just as a family who gathers at a common table and eats a common meal together on a regular basis is seen by educators and therapists to have an

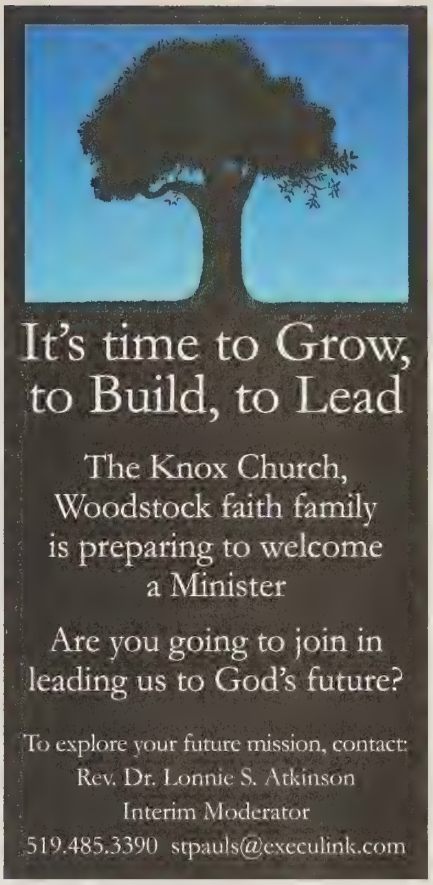
The experience of encountering Christ in the breaking of bread is a worthy thing to do more often

advantage over and against those who don't, so it is true in healthy, vital congregations. The frequent practice of Eucharistic brings to our lives the centrality of God's gifts to us. And this reminds us of our gratitude—our thanksgivings, our capacities to be generous—because we are believers in a generous, gracious, forgiving God. If at the core of our hope is the desire to emulate Christ, then the experience of encountering Christ in the breaking of bread is a worthy thing to do more often.

O taste and see that the Lord is Good. Smell the bread, see the bread, taste the bread; smell the wine, see the wine, taste the wine. The ears hear familiar words, but we digest the meaning of the faith in the actions of doing this celebration—that God is present. God is with us; God has not abandoned us nor will our God do that! Our God is merciful, forgiving, empowering, lifting us up to new challenges and trials but always with us, each step of the way.

A Eucharistic faith is a core tenant of the Presbyterian tradition. It values forgiveness and hope in God who has redeemed our world and us. By our actions and deeds we are known. May we know that God is in our lives and be seen to offer Him the worship and praise worthy from us. ■

Ken Craigie is an elder at Rosedale, Toronto. This is the first article of two.



PWS&D Poetry Contest



To celebrate our anniversary, we approached the *Record* and proposed a poetry contest to highlight the work of PWS&D. Members of St. Andrew's, Guelph, will adjudicate the submissions and the congregation will make a donation in the name of the winning entrant to PWS&D; the *Record* will publish selected submissions. All you have to do is write a poem (no epics, please; but open to all other styles). We particularly encourage youth and young-at-hearts to participate.

The poem should raise awareness for the work of PWS&D, express respect, love and compassion to those who suffer but stay away from showing pity. Respect is always a noble characteristic.

The deadline is October 31, 2007.
Please send your poems to contests@presbyterianrecord.ca.



A Call to Prayer

The one thing the Church needs desperately is to seek God's direction. BY CALVIN BROWN

I was speaking with a commissioner at General Assembly who lamented that so much of the business seemed routine. He felt that what we needed to do was to set aside all the routine business and spend the time dealing with pressing issues like the serious and ongoing decline of the church—which wasn't even mentioned. I remember number of years ago attending The Presbyterian Church in Canada's national think-tank and one of the amazing conclusions was that there should be regular days of prayer and discernment across the whole church. For the sake of convenience and manageability, it was suggested that they be held on a regional basis. I think someone even suggested that they might take the place of synod meetings. It is hard not to agree with such suggestions. If ever we decided to do such a thing, it would take a discipline and even a depth of devotion that most are not used to. (When was the last time you and your congregation were involved in a three- or four-day prayer meeting to seek God's direction?)

There are many questions. Is this suggestion just some pipe dream of evangelical pietists, confessionalists and charismatics? Does it pass the unspoken Presbyterian litmus test of common sense? Is this really what we should be doing? Is it only an urgent matter but not an important one?

Indeed, to my mind, it is the most important thing we can possibly do and it really matters for our future. In true Presbyterian fashion, such a gathering would no doubt also have the preaching of the Word and sung prayers of adoration, confession, thanksgiving and supplication and perhaps even discussion to share what was discerned, but the main focus of activity would be prayer—both in speaking to God and listening to Him through the word of scripture and even in periods of silent reflection.

I even dare to call for our church to have a national Presbyterian three-day concert of prayer. It will not solve all

our problems but I believe if we did it with a sense of urgency, earnestness, faith and passion it might give us a new beginning—a real renewal of our calling as church and agents of God's kingdom.

I'm reminded that there is urgency to this matter. We do not have much time left

In this regard I'm reminded that there is urgency to this matter. We do not have much time left. As the scripture reminds us in the words of Jesus as he addressed the early church: The Time Is Near!

As a denomination we are standing in the valley of decision. As I speak with many in our church, both leaders and people in the pew, no one seems to know which way to go to turn things around so that we will be a passionate and shining light for Christ in the land. There are programs to raise stewardship, there are activities to show compassion to others, there are committees to deal with all manner of issues but in it all it seems there is a feeling that we are just maintaining—that we just keep on doing the same things we did last year or the last 50 years. I don't pretend to have all the answers and I have little expectation there is a quick fix, but it seems to me that to move on in confidence we need to believe that God has a plan for us and that if we seek Him with our whole heart He will reveal to us what He is doing and our part in it.

John Calvin and John Knox believed that prayer was the key that unlocked the treasure chest of God's blessing and they turned their nations upside down. I believe it too. ■

Calvin Brown is the executive director of the Renewal Fellowship within The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

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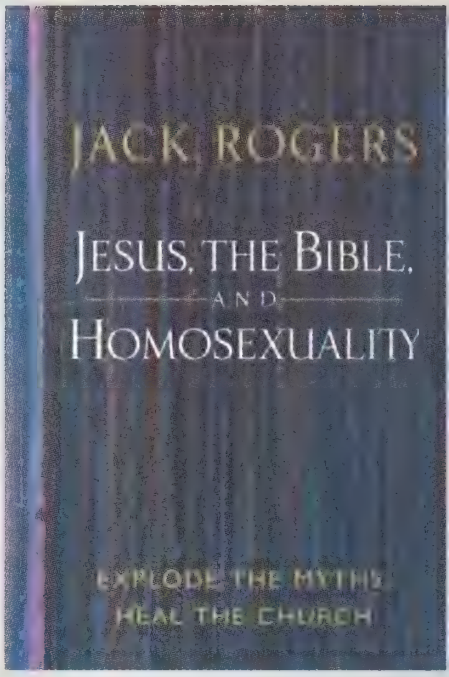
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Torn Apart



After a long, serious and painful process, an American Presbyterian changes his mind about homosexuality.

BY WILL INGRAM

Jesus, the Bible, and Homosexuality
by Jack Rogers
Westminster John Knox Press

Jack Rogers is 'one of us.' A former moderator of The Presbyterian Church (USA), a seminary professor and a self-confessed evangelical Christian, Rogers identifies himself as "a Christian who cares deeply about Christ's church. The church is being torn apart by controversy over whether people who are homosexual can have full rights of membership. Not just my own Presbyterian Church, but all of the denominations ... are divided." Rogers is a respected Presbyterian leader who has written a readable, accessible and important book for Presbyterians about one of the most significant issues confronting the church today.

After being asked to sit on a task force dealing with the issue of whether gay and lesbian people could serve as deacons and elders in a local congregation, Rogers began an intensive exploration of the criteria for evaluating the issue of homosexuality in the church. Over the course of more than a decade, Rogers moved from a position of opposition to the acceptance of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people, to a position advocating their full acceptance as members of the Church of Jesus Christ in general, and of the Presbyterian Church in particular. This change of mind and heart—which he describes as a process that was serious and painful—was not the result of an easy acceptance of cultural norms, nor a result of pressure from academic colleagues or pressure groups. Rather, as Rogers writes, "I changed my mind initially by going back to the Bible and taking seriously its central message for our lives." *Jesus, the Bible, and Homosexuality* offers the fruit of that long period of study and reflection. By embracing a Christ-centered approach to the interpretation of Scripture, as well as a fascinating exploration of the history of biblical interpretation, Roger's conclusions are worthy of serious consideration.

One of the great strengths of the book is that Rogers does not intend—or expect—the reader to casually accept his conclusions. Because of that openness, the book presents a thorough exploration of a contentious topic, written from the perspective of a person who understands the sensitivities of both sides of the issue.

Although one does not need advanced theological training to benefit from this book, there are sections which are not necessarily a quick read. This is particularly true of those sections that delve into detailed commentaries on the confessional basis of the reformed tradition. This is also the weakest section of the book because, though helpful, there are times when Rogers makes arguments about the implications of those confessional statements on the issue of human sexuality—even though the confessional documents being cited are not directly concerned with the issue. Our interpretations of those confessional statements are important, however, as they have dramatic effects on the ways that we interpret Scripture.

While the book is written out of the context of The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the parallels between our national churches are obvious. Our shared culture—and our shared histories of the interpretation of biblical texts, including the re-evaluation of biblical passages relating to women, slaves and divorced people—underline the relevance of Roger's analysis.

What is particularly interesting about this book is that it adopts much of the same methodology used by our denomination's Church Doctrine Committee in its report on human sexuality in 1994. The exploration that Rogers offers of the biblical, experiential, rational and traditional/confessional perspectives on the issue of homosexuality parallels the methodology used by our Church Doctrine Committee, and makes this book a worthwhile study.

To cite only a few examples of these parallels: Rogers examines the main biblical passages dealing with homo-

sexuality, as does the Church Doctrine Committee Report (1994). Both the report and Roger's book essentially dismiss the Genesis 19 and Judges 19 passages as offering significant insights into the modern understanding of homosexual behaviour, since both of those passages deal with inhospitality, sexual violence and the rape and abuse of women.

The oft-cited passages from the Holiness Codes in Leviticus, however, are interpreted differently. Although the Church Doctrine Committee Report confesses that "the use of the Holiness Code in Christian ethics needs further exploration," such exploration did not take place within that report. Rogers, by contrast, offers such an exploration. By placing the Holiness Code within the cultural, religious and socio-political context of its time, Rogers concludes that the nature of "abomination" that was associated with homosexual behaviour likely referred to the need for the Israelite people to distinguish themselves from the practices of their pagan neighbours. "Ritual purity was considered necessary to distinguish the Israelites from their pagan neighbours." Roger's desire to offer a Christ-centered mode of biblical interpretation leads him to conclude that a modern Christian sexual ethic that is based on an ancient Holiness Code—whose primary purpose was to create a distinct cultural and religious society for an emerging community—leaves much to be desired.

In a similar way, Roger's exploration of the verses from Romans 1 offers parallel explorations but contrasting conclusions to the Church Doctrine Committee Report. Where the committee's report acknowledges that there are complexities to Paul's discussions of "natural" and "unnatural" sexual behaviours, and that there are other passages in which it is unclear whether Paul's use of "natural" refers to the created order or to social conventions, the report nonetheless concluded that "while we note this different use by Paul, his intention in Romans 1 is clear." Rogers does not share this confidence in the clarity of Paul's intention. By contrast, he offers a far more elaborate discussion of the context and use of terms, and concludes that Paul's primary intention was to critique idolatry—likely in the city of Corinth from which

"I changed my mind initially by going back to the Bible and taking seriously its central message for our lives"

he was probably writing—and not to offer a definitive understanding of the "natural" or "unnatural" basis of human sexual behaviour. As Rogers states, "Paul's condemnation of immoral sexual behavior is not appropriately applied to contemporary gay or lesbian Christians who are not idolaters, who love God, and who seek to live in thankful obedience to God."

Regardless of whether or not the reader agrees with Rogers' conclusions, such differences in emphasis and interpretation reveal the relevance of his book. Perhaps what is most noteworthy about this work is that after offering a far more comprehensive, intensive exploration of the criteria for evaluation than the Church Doctrine Committee presented, the book arrives at the opposite conclusion than the one recommended by the committee and subsequently adopted by our General Assembly. ■

Rev. Will Ingram is minister at St. Andrew's, King St., Toronto.

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An Outsider on the Inside

Lectionary readings for October have Jesus on the run. BY LAURENCE DEWOLFE

Gospel for October 14, 2007 (Proper 23): Luke 17:11-19

This year the calendar plays a neat trick on us. Thanksgiving Sunday is the first Sunday of October because the second Monday is the eighth. Canadian Thanksgiving and Worldwide Communion come together, providing an opportunity to teach Presbyterians to say "Eucharist" without fear of incipient Anglicanism. This combination of dates also rescues the Gospel for October 14 from surface-reading sermons on thankfulness. The tale of the "10 unclean with nowhere to go" isn't just about gratitude. Yes, Leper 10 turns around and thanks Jesus. The other nine go to show themselves to the priests, in the prescribed ritual of recognition and thankoffering. We can't say they aren't grateful. We only know what's in the Samaritan's heart. And he probably knows he can't go with the others to give thanks their way.

In our readings for October Luke wants us to see Jesus running, hear him running out of breath, feel him running out of time. The momentum toward the cross is gathering speed. That's at the level of the story itself. Now remember Luke is just the first of a two-volume work. On the Luke-Acts level, Jesus pushes his disciples toward the day when he'll commission them as his witnesses to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the entire world. On this level, the urgency doesn't come from the imminence of the cross. It comes from the need to prepare for the mission of the church.

On his way to Jerusalem, Jesus meets 10 lepers. They're excluded from the community because of the condition of their skin and extremities—could be from melanoma, or acne, or plantar warts, or actual leprosy. No one in town wants to look at them, let alone risk catching anything from them. As Jesus rushes southward it takes just a moment to answer their cry for help and send them back to religion and community. Nine of them, anyway. What's this Samaritan doing there? On the level of the narrative, he's an excellent plot device. Jesus is on his way toward conflict and rejection. The only one who sees who he really is and what he's about is a man who shouldn't know. At least not yet. Luke loves to show us Jesus as the Outsider on the Inside, who brings outsiders in. Desperate days call for drastic action and the Samaritan understands, with his loud praise and extravagant devotion. We can see the 12 looking on, slack-jawed.

On the Luke-Acts level, Leper 10 is what's in store for disciples of Jesus—the kind of person the Spirit will take them to meet. The disciples will also follow Lepers One through Nine to their date with the priests. When they doubt their call to go beyond their own people, the Spirit will inspire someone to say, "One day Jesus was on the way to Jerusalem, walking the border between Samaria and Galilee . . ."

What happens when disciples walk the border today? Presbyterians prefer to stay inside the limits of the familiar, predictable, and safe. We're so good at looking out for one another, looking after our own kind! What do we do when we hear God's praise coming from unknown territory, in an unfamiliar voice? That voice from outside might just be the voice of Jesus calling us out of our sanctuaries to walk the border with him.

These are desperate days for both the church and the world. Desperate days call for drastic action. People who aren't afraid to walk the border between the known and the unknown, safety and danger, despair and hope, understand this, and find the courage to do what they must do. ■

Rev. Laurence DeWolfe is minister at St. David's, Halifax.



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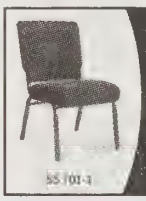
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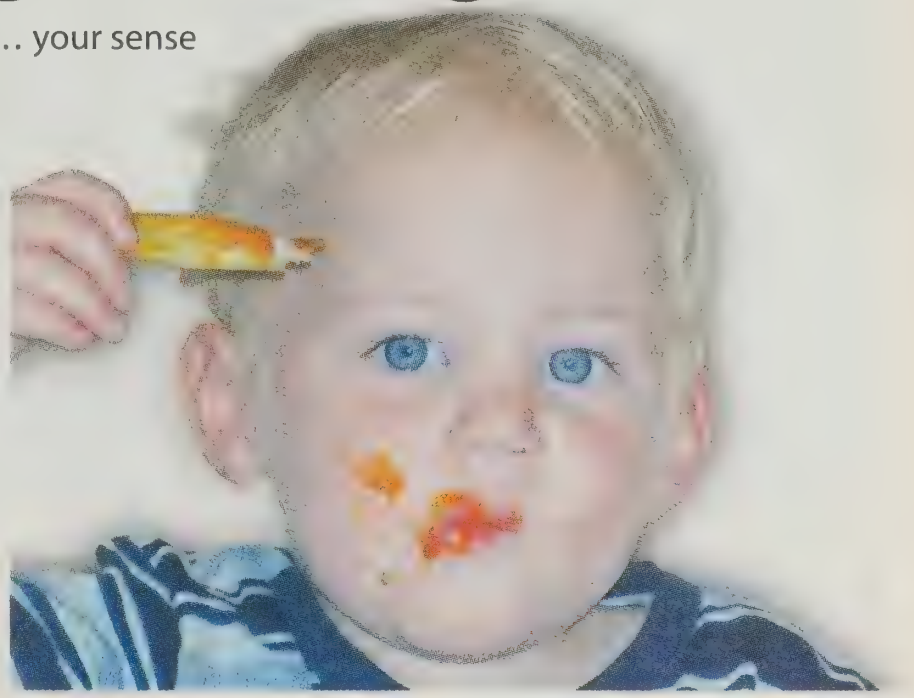
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The *Presbyterian Record*'s Christmas Carol Contest is open to all those young or young at heart and to all Sunday Schools.

Deadline: November 15

Staying Young

Those alfalfa sprouts will kill… your sense of humour. BY PHIL CALLAWAY



My mother is in a nursing home and the doctor just gave her six months to live. But when he found out she couldn't pay her bill, he gave her another year. Last night after spending some time with her, the thought hit me, "If I stay in peak physical condition, I will be a drain on the medical system." And so I have uncovered three ways to ensure that this does not happen.

1. Change your diet and exercise habits. I exercised for the last time today. Retired my sneakers. My light weights. My pass to the exercise room. The resolve began when an acquaintance of mine dropped dead of a heart attack. When I thought of the last time I saw him alive, how he was waddling over to the Twinkies aisle in the supermarket, it hit me like a runaway grocery cart: die eating.

And so tonight we will order out for pizza. And Chinese food. If God had wanted us to lift weights, He'd have made our arms heavier. Sure you may develop flabby thighs, but your stomach will cover them.

2. Have more children. Children are messy and won't let you sleep a wink. Having children is like installing a Nascar track in your head. It's noisy. Besides, the average male child costs roughly $3.4 million (in Lego alone) by the time he is eight, and you can double that if you have a darling little girl who steals your heart. Oh sure, they start out cuddly and they giggle, but don't be fooled. They are here with one thing in mind: getting you off the planet.

Grownups have always been suspicious of children. I realized this when I was very small. They told us smoking was bad for us, knowing we'd try it out and maybe get hooked and die. They covered my crib with lead-based paints. There were no childproof lids on the Aspirin bottle, no seatbelts, airbags or guardrails. They encouraged us to ride in the back of pickups or build our own go-carts and parachutes. We ate worms and mud pies. We played with BB guns and smashed rocks with a hammer and no goggles. They never offered us bike helmets or bottled water and they introduced us to things like monkey bars.

I was just a wee little kid when they introduced me to ice hockey. They strapped blades on my feet, handed me a sharp stick and something called a puck. They pushed me out on the ice, then stood behind plywood sheets and wire mesh to see what happened. I knew what they wanted. They wanted me dead. They knew I was a threat to a long and peaceful life.

So have more children. It's not too late. If you're a little older, think of Sarah and Abraham.

3. Travel to exotic places. I recommend a honeymoon in Iraq or cycling from Beirut to Jerusalem. Pack light. Carry explosives.

Okay, I've been joking and hoping all the while that you wouldn't write me a letter before you read the conclusion.

Here it is: I want to die young … as old as I can.

We stay young by keeping our sense of humour intact. By not wasting time listening to gossip. By inviting friends over to dinner even if the carpet is stained and the sofa faded and we end up eating ice cream nine times a week.

We stay young by centering our thoughts on things that are pure, lovely and of good report. By putting our arms out car windows more often. By burning expensive candles before they melt in storage. By getting so excited about the love of Jesus that our teeth can barely keep up with our mouth.

So tomorrow morning I think I'll pull out those sneakers, the light weights and the alfalfa sprouts. ■

Phil Callaway is an award-winning author and international speaker. Visit him online at www.laughagain.org



Confessions of a People Pleaser

Choose to observe Christ, and it'll never be taken away from you. BY DAVID WEBBER

This morning I awoke to the sound of a jackhammer. I thought at first I was snoozing inside a construction zone but after a few shakes of my head I realized it was our old friend Flicker. Flicker is a rather large common flicker (Colaptes auratus) who drops by from time to time to rattle our cage, literally. This morning he was doing a particularly good job of it. I threw my legs over the side of the bed and stalked out of the bedroom to peer through the kitchen window and watch him. He was standing on the board on which our bird feeder is mounted and bashing his beak against the board for all he was worth (flickers are in the woodpecker family). The board is attached to our metal deck railing and so he was setting up a vibration through it and the deck and the whole wall of the house. The wall of the house acted like a huge amplifier. The racket was so loud that the windows were rattling. But it wasn't the noise that got to me.

As I watched out the window, Flicker bashed his beak against the board and then he paused to look with disgust at the empty bird feeder. Then he let loose with another machinegun burst with his beak. He paused with some satisfaction and this time turned his head to look sideways through the large window, which framed me in my underwear. As he scowled directly at me in my scanty unmentionables, I felt gelded of all pride and usefulness. I felt like he had caught me in my underwear not doing my job. Clutching at my groin with both hands I doubled over and fled for the bedroom in embarrassment and guilt. The racket happened again and I peered meekly around the bedroom doorposts to look out the large window, now a safe distance on the other side of the house. Flicker scowled directly at me again and even at the much greater distance seemed to pierce me with his sharp black eyes.

"Linda, you gotta feed the birds, right now!" I said to the rumpled heap in the bed.

"Why? Is Flicker making you feel guilty again?" replied the rumpled heap. Linda peered out from the heap and snickered at me and the emasculated look on my face. "You have got to be the only person I know of in the whole Cariboo who would allow themselves to feel guilt-ridden

and harassed by a mere bird."

She is right; I do allow myself to feel guilty and harangued by mere birds, and just about everybody else. I have this hook in my belly that demands that I satisfy what I perceive are the expectations of every living thing. I will double myself over backwards to try and meet everybody's expectations and never feel like I have done it adequately. Even guests for dinner at our home splay me out like a worm, caught by the hook in my people-pleasing belly, wiggling helplessly at the end of my "need to satisfy" line. "You really don't have to ask 10 times if someone would like to have more mashed potatoes, dear," Linda said to me after one of my recent dinner performances. "It's OK to just let them say, 'Pass the spuds, please.' " Does anybody else out there know how it feels to be an addicted, compulsive people-pleaser?

I have done a fair bit of thinking about this "problem." It took me a long time to recognize it as a problem at all, and longer still to realize that I was afflicted with it. It took even longer to try and figure out the motivations behind it. Eventually I realized, that among other things, I really don't feel very good about myself and I feel like I have to earn people's approval by meeting their needs. Often I even put the Christian stamp of endorsement on what I do by labeling it "selflessness." Nothing could be further from the truth. Self is usually smack-dab in the centre of the people-pleaser affliction. I discovered that most of what I do for other people was really to meet my own needs. And when I thought about it, I realized that this was a pathetic motivation for helping anyone.

"You have got to be the only person I know of in the whole Cariboo who would allow themselves to feel guilt-ridden and harassed by a mere bird"

After years of working on this, I haven't got my affliction licked yet. In fact, you might say I am a recovering compulsive people-pleaser. Oh, I tout slogans like, "I don't do guilt" and all that kind of stuff, but my wife knows that it ain't true. All it takes is a little temptation from a mere bird and I am in danger of falling off the wagon. But you know what, I am working on it. Specifically, I am working on three danger zones. One is coming to know the truth that it is possible to have a healthy and solid work ethic, which is very important to me, without being a compulsive people-pleaser. Compulsive people-pleasers like me tend to get the two all mixed up. Another is the realization that compulsive people-pleasing actually gets in the way of my spiritual walk with Christ. Compulsive people-pleasers like me tend to miss this truth. The third is that it is not Christ's will that I should be a compulsive people-pleaser, but in fact be liberated from it to enjoy him and enjoy observing him at work in other people's lives.

Compulsive people-pleasers like me tend to have a bit of a messiah complex, connecting working for Christ too closely with the workings of Christ. These three danger zones are often at the root of burnout, particularly for Christian pastors who often take them even a step further and give them the stamp of holiness. Go figure, holiness being linked to compulsive people-pleasing and burnout.

As I work on these things, one of the most fruitful parts of the Bible that I have spent hours contemplating is this: "While Jesus and his followers were travelling, Jesus went into a town. A woman named Martha let Jesus stay at her house. Martha had a sister named Mary, who was sitting at Jesus' feet and listening to him teach. But Martha was busy with all the work to be done. She went in and said, 'Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me alone to do all the work? Tell her to help me.' But the Lord answered her, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things. Only one thing is important. Mary has chosen the better thing, and it will never be taken away from her.' " *(Luke 10:38-42)* ■

Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the Record. *He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C. house church ministry. His most recent book is* Like a Winter's Aspen: Embracing the Creator's Fire.

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Thanksgiving FAQs...

WHEN IS IT?

In Canada, we celebrate Thanksgiving the second Monday in October.

WHAT IS IT FOR?

Unlike the American tradition of remembering pilgrims settling in the New World at Thanksgiving, Canadians give thanks for a successful harvest.

It is, after all, in the Bible. "And the feast of harvest, the first fruits of your labours, which you have sown in the field; and the feast of ingathering at the end of the year, when you have gathered in the fruits of your labours from the field." *-Exodus 23:16*

WHO STARTED IT?

People have been celebrating Thanksgiving in Canada for hundreds of years now. European farmers held celebrations at harvest time where they filled a curved goat's horn with fruit and grain to give thanks for their harvest being a good one.

This horn was called a Horn of Plenty ... or a Cornucopia, and the farm workers who left Europe to start a new life in Canada took this tradition with them.

WHY DO WE STILL DO IT?

On January 31st, 1957, the Canadian Parliament proclaimed "a Day of General Thanksgiving to Almighty God for the bountiful harvest with which Canada has been blessed."

MOST IMPORTANTLY, WHO ARE WE THANKING?

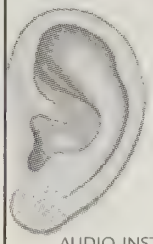
We know that all good things come from God. He gives the seeds, the soil, the water and the sunlight. He created the hands of those who care for the crops and those who prepare the meals. His love lives through the families that come together to celebrate their blessings and bounty from God and to remember to give thanks for them, today and always.



Give thanks to the Lord our God, his love endures forever!

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Sunny Corner Pastoral Charge, N.B., St. Stephen's, Sunny Corner, St. Paul's, Warwick; Rev. H. Martyn Van Essen, 7 Hierlihy Rd., Tabusintac, NB E9H 1Y5; 506-779-1812; hmvanessen@hotmail.com.

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Obituaries

LASBY, G. Wallace, dedicated elder for 47 years and clerk of session for 32 years at Eden Mills Presbyterian Church, Eden Mills, Ont., passed away on Aug. 4, 2007, at the age of 83. Wallace was a respected and dedicated member of his church and will be greatly missed. He is survived by his wife Maisie; family Bill, Bob, Cathy, David and Shirley; grandchildren Justin, Joshua and Jessica and brother Joe and Shirley.

MACDONALD, Rev. Charles, passed away peacefully to be with his Lord and Saviour on Sun., July 29, 2007, in his 93rd year. Rev. MacDonald was born in Medicine Hat, Alta.

From 1934 to 1955 he served as a lay missionary in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia.

Rev. MacDonald was a graduate of Presbyterian College Montreal and the University of Saskatchewan (history major). He was ordained in 1956 in Dalhousie, N.B., serving Dalhousie, Jaquet River and New Mills. In 1959, a move was made to Stellarton, N.S., and then to Glencoe, Ont., in 1963, serving Glencoe and Wardsville. Rev. MacDonald served as a minister at Knox Presbyterian Church, Brantford, Ont., and Mount Pleasant Presbyterian Church, Mount Pleasant, Ont., from 1977 until his retirement in 1985.

He was the beloved husband of

Jemima for 51 years; dear father of Eoin, Margaret and Caroline; and is lovingly remembered by five grandchildren.

MCFADZEAN, Thomas James, died on Aug. 14, 2007, at the age of 87 after living with Parkinson's disease for several years. Born in Brussels, Ont., he moved to Toronto during the war and served Melrose Park Presbyterian Church faithfully in many capacities over a 45-year period including as elder, chair of the board of managers, trustee and representative elder to presbytery and General Assembly. Also, he served on the board of Evangel Hall for six years. A gracious Christian gentleman, he never sought the limelight but took quiet pleasure in encouraging others and delighting in their achievements.

In all of his activities, Tom was supported by his wife of 62 years, Edith (nee MacTavish), also of Brussels. He is sorely missed by her, their two daughters and sons-in-law, their grandchildren and great-grandchildren. ■

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Thanksgiving Through Suffering

A trip to Africa offers insights into the complexity of challenges there. BY REV. DR. J. H. HANS KOUWENBERG



Rev. Dr. John Gladstone, one of Canada's late princes of preachers, offers wise insight in a sermon—based on Luke 17:15, 18:11 and 22:17—entitled Graduating In Gratitude which states there are three levels of thanksgiving. The first, most rudimentary, is basic, obvious thanksgiving for the grace of gifts and mercies experienced; the second, more problematic, is the kind of thanks which compares our fortunate condition to the less fortunate condition of others and the last, most mature thanks, is thanksgiving in the face of the world's or one's personal agonies and suffering.

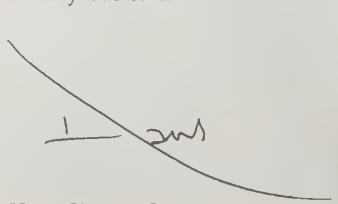
In August, my wife Colleen and I went on a moderatorial trip to Africa—that continent of tears. People greeted us in Kenya and Malawi with kindness and, especially, in the latter country—the 10th poorest in the world—with great, unabashed and undeserved warmth and affection. I am truly grateful for the gift of Christian people who seem to be so genuinely grateful for the brief visit of even one of the leaders of one of their smallest partner churches.

In Kenya, Dr. Rick Allen, who's been working for 13 years training leaders of the Presbyterian Church in East Africa how to deal with the terrible scourge of the HIV/AIDS pandemic which has stricken so many, and his irrepressible side-kick, Rev. Joseph Mothaly, welcomed us at the airport. We stayed at the impressive Presbyterian Guest House in Nairobi. We visited the Presbyterian Theological College, about to receive university status, in the south west of the city. I preached and shared in the celebration of communion with Rev. Silas Mbabu and a full house at the large, youthful, suburban Kahawe Farmer's Church on the northeast side. We visited the powerful work of the Eastleigh Community Centre, which provides pre-school and primary education, as well as vocational training such as sewing, hairdressing, carpentry, auto-mechanics and pottery classes, in a slum neighbourhood that includes many Somalian refugees—all in the context of Christian witness. And, oh yes, we also saw some lovely long-necked giraffes and wicked-looking crocodiles.

In Malawi, some lively members of the Ladies Guild sang and danced to celebrate our arrival at the airport! Rev. Glenn and Linda Inglis, our Presbytery friends, recently re-appointed at the request of our partners in the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian to head up their Blantyre Synod Development Commission, were there as well to welcome us and show us around. We visited pre-school children at the Chilobwe community-based Orphan Care Centre, set in one of the poorer villages outside the city. They need help with their rainwater tank and deteriorating biffies! We saw the fine work being done at the Mulanje Mission hospital, church and schools, as well as at the newly renovated Likhubula Youth Centre on the forested slopes of the magnificent Mulanje Mountain. I addressed members of the Blantyre City Presbytery on Schwarz's principles of the health and well being of the local church; Colleen spoke to the St. James Women's Guild. I also preached and was privileged to celebrate baptism with the families of 11 babies in the first service of the St. Columba congregation, after which Glenn and Linda were inducted into their new position.

Just north of Blantyre, we visited the Chigodi women's Training Centre, and on the way to Zomba, a model farm at the Synod's Naming'azi Farm Training Centre; then it was on to Zomba Theological College. We also visited the Liwonde National Park and saw our share of gigantic hippos and elephants, as well as a number of other animals.

Throughout our trip we were struck by the faithful witness of servants of the church, among the Africans themselves, and from our own church in Canada, all serving for the sake of our Lord and his gospel. The needs are immense and seem insurmountable, given the social challenges and the political realities. Nevertheless, Colleen and I are very grateful to God and to our church for having sent us to Africa in order that we gain a greater insight into the enormity and the complexity of the challenges and the problems which Africans and those who stand by them and with them must face on a daily basis. ■



Hans Kouwenberg

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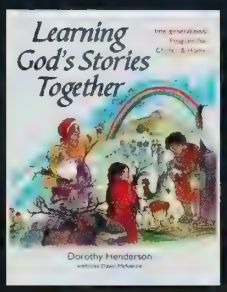
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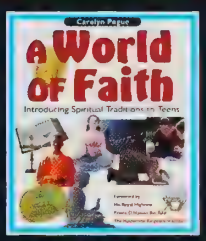
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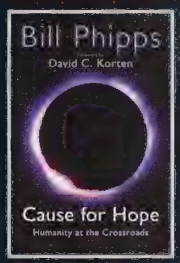
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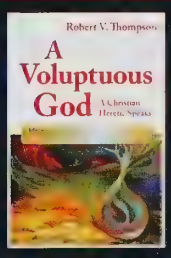
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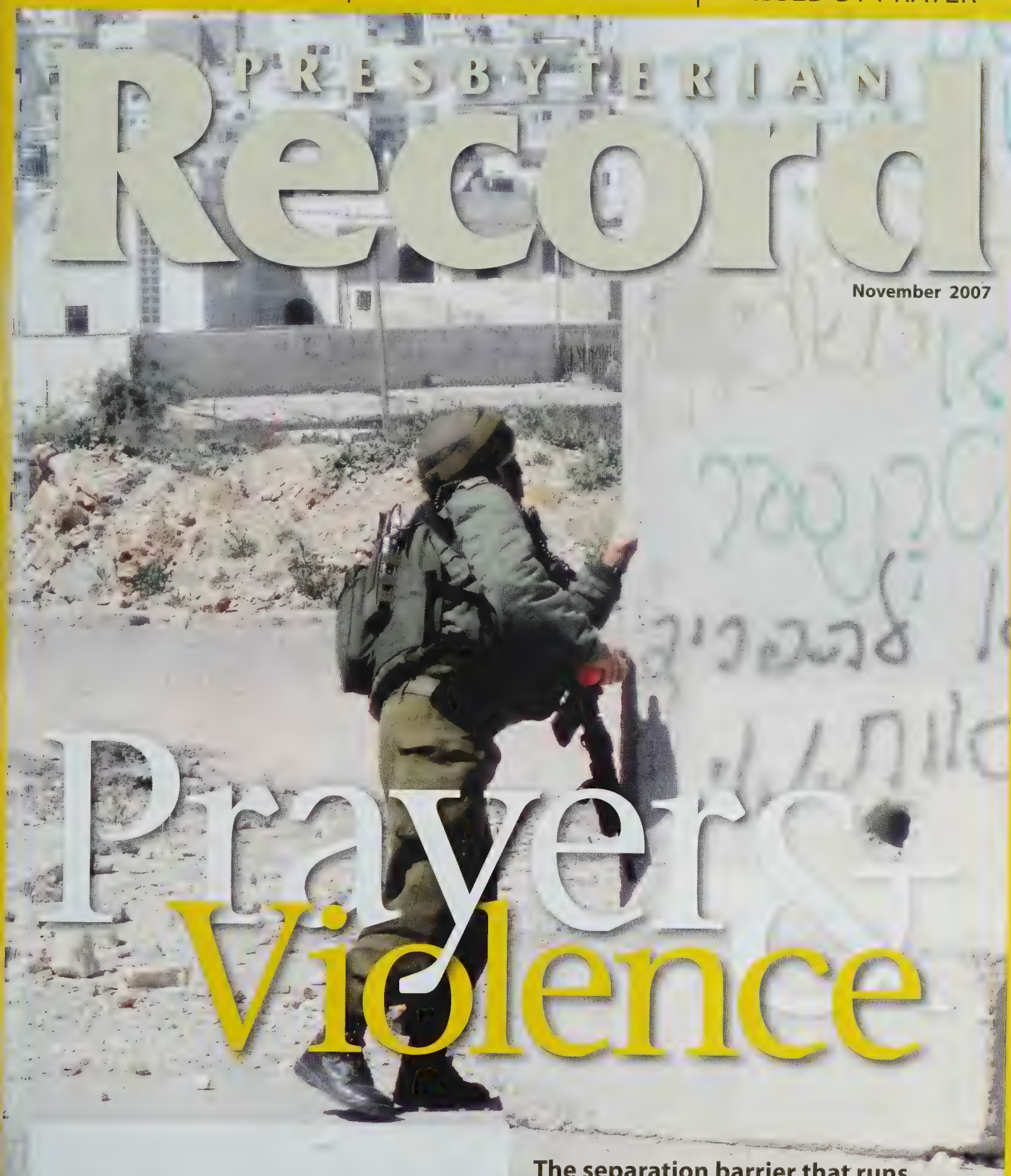
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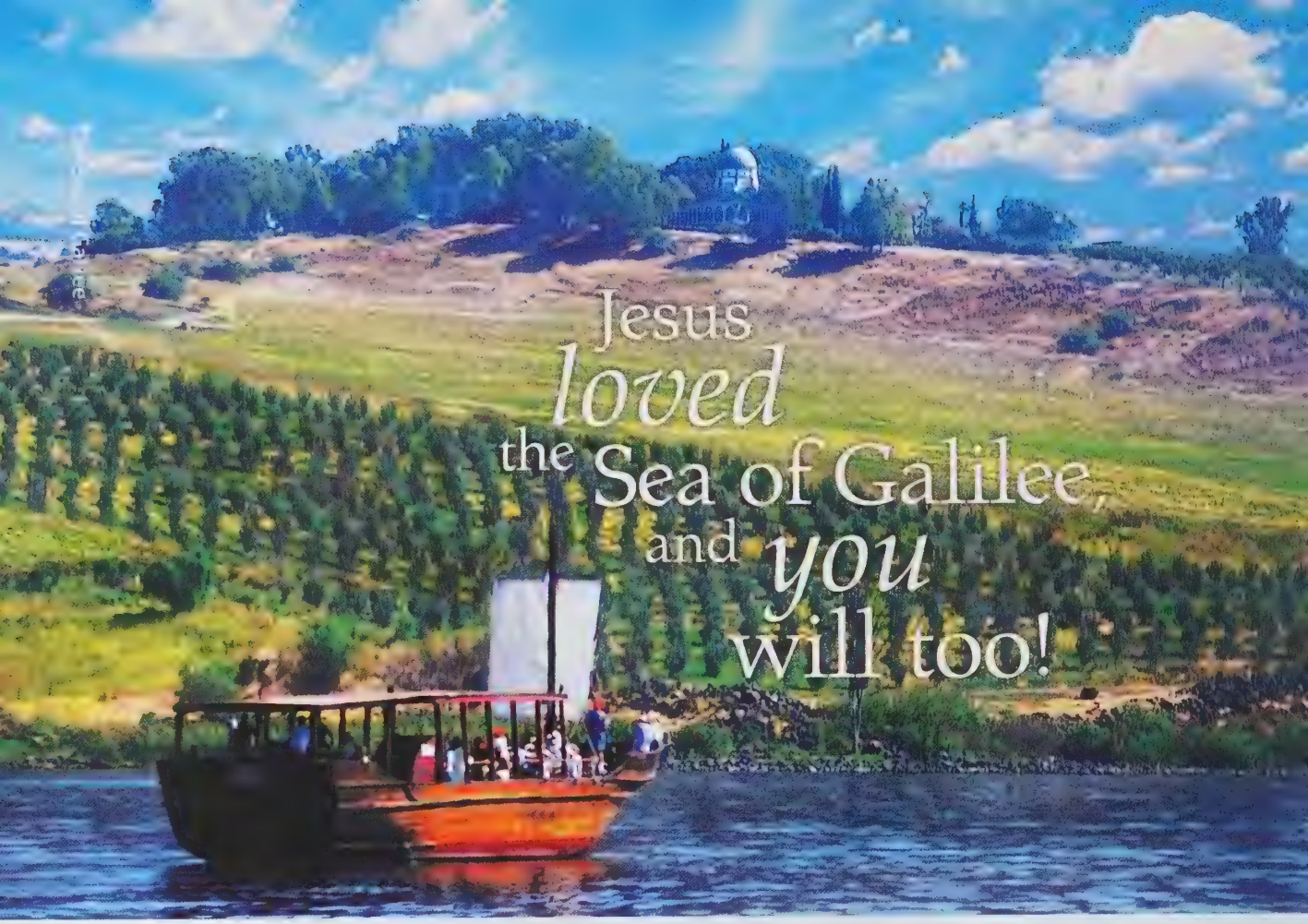
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A GRAVE SIN

Trinity has been led to leave. BY DAVID HARRIS



Authority comes in at least two guises. The first is given to a person by an organization through position and responsibility. The second is an inner gift or *charism*. Rev. Carey Nieuwhof was given authority by the Presbyterian Church when he was ordained a minister of word and sacrament and called to Trinity, Oro. The latter is a gift he has in spades: Tall, eloquent and bright, he is a charismatic presence leading worship.

But Mr. Nieuwhof has abused his authority in every sense, by persuading most of his congregation at Trinity to leave the denomination and associate with a U.S.-based church.

The ostensible reasons for the departures are that the Presbyterian Church, primarily the Presbytery of Barrie, was too slow to respond to requests from Trinity's session to talk about creating satellite congregations in other cities, and so other presbyteries. Further, Mr. Nieuwhof has alleged that it would take at least five years to make the necessary changes under the church's polity to accommodate them.

The facts, according to Mr. Nieuwhof's own timetable, are that Trinity's session first asked to meet with presbytery in July, 2006. Setting aside July and August for vacations, that means when Trinity's elders decided to leave the church in July, 2007, they had engaged with presbytery for less than a year.

Given the nature of the request and the various reasonable consultations required, this hardly seems a long time. True, Trinity's leaders had been discussing and planning their expansion for several years, but they apparently didn't share that meaningfully along the way with presbytery, which is the body responsible for the congregation.

At no point did presbytery tell Trinity's leadership that their model wasn't possible or that it would take years to be approved. (Though curiously for now, two satellite sites of the new church they are forming will both be within the presbytery.) On the other hand, such changes in polity and ministry should be thought out carefully.

But suggesting the denomination couldn't accommodate their timeframe masks the deeper issue that Mr. Nieuwhof has abandoned the Presbyterian Church's theology and supplanted it with his own interpretation of Scripture. Further, he apparently used his position as a minister to convert his elders and congregation.

In comments posted online, he alludes to the church's discussions around homosexuality and, as he puts it, whether Jesus occupies "a unique position with respect to salvation" as disturbing to him, his elders and staff. That may win sympathy from some but it is also groundless.

First, the church remains on the record as opposed to homosexual marriage. Secondly, why is merely discussing what Jesus meant in saying he is "the Way" disturbing? But if it is, should it not also be disturbing that Mr. Nieuwhof and his session have accepted the principles of their new associates, North Point Community Church, that women cannot be elders and ministers—a position contrary to the teachings of the Presbyterian Church?

Mr. Nieuwhof also admits he has been revising his belief in infant baptism over the years. Baptism is the most important Christian sacrament. Yet Mr. Nieuwhof and his elders have had no quibbles discussing and now disagreeing with the Presbyterian Church, not to mention the vast majority of Christians, East and West, who have practiced infant baptism since at least the fourth century and arguably since the earliest days of the church.

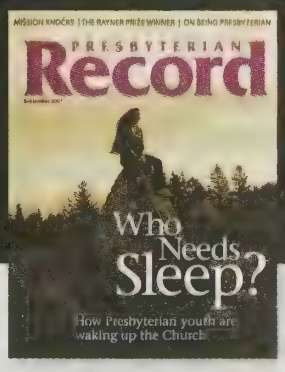
If you decide as a matter of conscience that you can no longer accept the teaching of your church, the proper thing to do is resign from the denomination and leave. It is another thing altogether to use one's position and authority as a spiritual leader to persuade others in your care to abandon the church and its teaching.

There are many positive aspects about the new ministry Mr. Nieuwhof and his team are planning that ought to be closely examined by mainline churches. There is undoubtedly much to be learned. But the manner in which Mr. Nieuwhof, his staff and leadership team have gone about this is not acceptable. Mr. Nieuwhof, in particular, has abused his authority. Quite simply, it is a grave sin. ■

David Harris

Letters

letters@presbyterianrecord.ca



An unconscious death grip

Re Look out Church, Here they Come, Sept., by Patricia and Ryan Browne

We in the Presbyterian Church do a poor job of encouraging young people to continue in the denomination. Two examples come to mind: At the 2006 General Assembly there was an articulate and passionate Young Adult Representative from the Maritimes who was prophetic, pertinent and practical every time he came to the microphone to speak to the issues facing the church. Yet, he might as well have saved his breath for all the influence he had. Assembly chose to ignore what he said.

The second example was at the Synod of Eastern Ontario and Quebec several years ago when the Presbyterian Young Peoples Society made its annual report. It was like a breath of fresh air—full of enthusiasm, joy, happiness, optimism and passion. Yet, as soon as it was over, dark clouds returned and delegates immediately returned to the sludge of fiscal restraints.

We as a church choose not to take young people seriously, seeing them only as a means of fun; nice to have around, but denying them any real input in the avenues of power. It stems from union in 1925. The continuing church developed an unconscious death grip on survival, blinding and deafening us to the possibilities, nuances and visions of new and unfamiliar voices; because of our fear of letting go and trembling we may lose everything. So, it continues, and young people leave every year, taking with them their vibrancy, energy and zeal. It happens at seminary. People who were outstanding in the PYPS, camping and evangelizing, are instead judged on their ability to conform to the academic standards of Greek, denominational polity and whether or not they are kosher.

Speaking as someone with 25 years experience in small, struggling congregations, the prevailing ethos revolves around the tried and true rather than the risky and Christ-centred because to do what Jesus advocated, to love your neighbour as yourself, is too often perceived as un-Presbyterian. Young people, the PCC secretly believes, can't be trusted, so, while giving lip service to their idealism, we fall back on what worked in the past, rather than considering what might be effective for today. It all comes down to vision and attitude: better the way it is than something that may upset. And as minister you learn to pick your fights carefully, by painful experience selecting those you know you can win. Pity.

It's no wonder the Patricias and Ryans are too often lost to our denomination.

REV. ROD LAMB, KENORA, ONT.

The September issue was a well done and encouraging read. Praise God for the youth of our church. I would like an afternoon session with each one who has written for us.

Connie Purvis's article is the one prompting this letter to the editor. I love her candid description of expectations about Real Life and wonder if my 65 years of experience might be encouraging to her. I credit the "benevolent, enigmatic King" she refers to for the enormously satisfying and fulfilling

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Pontius' Puddle



life I have experienced.

Her reference to the "frustration for newcomers to Real Life" hit me hard as a senior in high school, but the "consolation" she refers to took over after six months of very rough sledding.

I believe it was my parents' respect for the book she refers to as the "entire Bible" which prompted them to expose me to the practical application of it that laid a foundation in my life that permitted many totally unexpected and rewarding directives to present themselves.

This is all recorded in *The Path of Life—Memoirs of Clare and Grace McGill*. Now out of print, copies are available in the church archives and many churches. I would be happy to communicate with any interested in my Real Life.

GRACE MCGILL, GLENCOE, ONT.

The Who Needs Sleep? issue offers some encouragement. Without taking away from this hope, as a denomination we are losing too many people of all ages. Discerning the real need of the twentysomethings is a profound shortfall throughout our church, as with many other denominations, save the presence of YARS at General Assembly.

That said, the collection of articles failed to inform us of the real investment we need to make in this age group to both prosper their personal faith in Jesus Christ and release them into their fullest potential in our churches. Further, the articles failed to teach us what investment we must make in our own faith to insure we have a future for them. Could you run a follow-up article to teach us the concrete concerns this age group has and the fundamentals of faith in Christ we have failed to pass to our youth?

REV. JACK DUCKWORK, WINNIPEG

Service station of the church

The September news item More Staff Shuffled at 50 Wynford, twice uses the term "head office" as referring to 50 Wynford. That is not correct.

In the Presbyterian Church, authority rests in the courts of the church. Any authority which boards, committees, agencies and others in the church offices have is given by and subject to the courts of the church, specifically to the General Assembly.

Fifty Wynford is the location of the national offices of the church, but it is not in any way the head office. I like to think of 50 Wynford as the service station of our church, existing to serve the courts and congregations of our church.

REV. HARROLD MORRIS, TORONTO

A bit annoyed

As a regular contributor to PWS&D, I was a bit annoyed to see our relatively meager funds spent in Pakistan and China:

•Countries which can afford two of the largest armies in the world

•Countries which regularly brag about the number and effectiveness of their offensive nuclear weapons

•Countries which can afford and have developed ballistic missiles

•Countries which I would think could provide sufficient aid to their own people if their unelected leaderships were inclined to do so

I'd prefer to see PWS&D funds spent elsewhere.

GARY NAYLOR, TYNE VALLEY, P.E.I.

From Princetown to Persia

It is worthy of note in the missionary annuals of our church that in 1882 Annie Montgomery went from Malpeque, P.E.I. (then known as Princetown) to Hamadan—about half way between Tehran and Baghdad—in Persia and laboured in the Faith Hubbard School until 1917. She served there for 35 years. This year marks the 90th anniversary of her death. She died in Hamadan, known in biblical times as Ecbatana, and was buried under the pew which she had occupied in the church where she worshipped. Her sister Charlotte also went to Hamadan four years after Annie. Ill-health necessitated her return to Malpeque where she died and was buried in 1905. She

had been a missionary for 19 years. Apparently these two missionaries were supported by the church in the United States, since the Canadian church did not have sufficient funds. Such a record of devoted service to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ remains a source of encouragement to our church today.

REV. ALLAN M. DUNCAN, BROCKVILLE, ONT.

Last word on Deal Breaker letters (maybe)

In an interview, the American Presbyterian minister and author Frederick Buechner was asked to comment on Jesus' claim in John 14:6: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." His reply was this. "What arrogance, but blind egotism that might seem to be, until you live with it for a while and think about it. What was Jesus' way? He didn't say 'What I say is the way;' he didn't say 'Presbyterianism is the way;' he said' 'I am the way.' My kind of life, pay attention to my kind of life, that is the way."

Later in the interview, he added: "He didn't say, What I teach, or what people teach about me, or the church or any creedal affirmation that is the truth, but 'I am the truth.' What you see in me, the life, the freedom, the compassion, the love that you see in me, that is what it's all about."

John wrote, "Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God." 1 John 4:7. According to Jesus there will be sheep who arrive in the kingdom who didn't even know they were on the way. Matt. 25:31-46.

Why on earth is this a deal-breaker for the church?

DR. CLEAVER KEENAN, NEW LISKEARD, ONT.

Amy, Amy, she's the one

It has been awhile since Amy MacLachlan spoke to our Knox, Burlington, Ont., WMS meeting, but I want to let you know how much we enjoyed her PowerPoint presentation to the 32 women present that hot evening. Everyone spoke of her friendliness, smile, graciousness and comfort level amongst so many strangers.

She is a real asset to your team and we look forward to hearing and reading more about her and her work.

ELAINE FORGO, BURLINGTON, ONT.

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People & Places

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What a year at St. John's, Grimsby, Ont.: They raised funds for a new local hospice; sent 15 mountain bikes to Malawi and continued their support of Canadian Foodgrains Bank through their Easter offerings. Oh, and they celebrated their 175th anniversary. From left: Bill Harris, member, Rev. Russell Hall and Rev. Reay Duke, former ministers, Wilma Welsh, former moderator of assembly, Rev. Robert Docherty, current minister and Rev. Dr. John Johnston, from the Presbytery of Hamilton. For the full story, turn to our website.



Mt. Zion, Ridgetown, Ont., celebrated a wonderful summer sharing nine services with Church of Christ and Erie St. United with a Steamin' Good Time Corn Roast. Rev. Paul Shaw (Mt. Zion) is seen with Erie St.'s Paul Balkwill and Rev. Judith Fayter in front of an antique fire truck which was equipped with an Mp3 player for some corn shuckin' music. For more photos see our website.



The two women in the middle are Judy Lynn Archer and Barb Wychopen, both with Women Building Futures, which provides employment programming for women. WBF is building a housing unit for women. The two men at either end are Rev. Don Mayne and John Wright (United), co-chairs of No Room In the Inn Committee of Edmonton, which provides housing for the under-privileged. With help from NRII, $42,000 has been raised through Edmonton and area churches. The other two women are Presbyterian Millie Seitz, left, and Anglican Rev. Eileen Conway. The photo was taken in May at St. Barbara's Russian Orthodox Cathedral. For a more detailed article on this wonderful initiative see our website.



Members of the Presbytery of Kingston on their way to a meeting at St. Paul's, Amherst Island, Ont., have to cross by ferry. Photo by Maureen Cooper.



Love him tender, love him sweet: Dr. Bob, or to use his full title, Rev. Dr. R. Cruickshank (left) retired in June after 37 years in ministry. Elvis, also known as Bill Knibbs, made sure Bob wasn't left crying in the chapel at a less than formal retirement party, held at St. John's, Medicine Hat, Alta. Many members of his former congregation in Calgary were also amongst the 200 in attendance. Oh and that's Joan, Bob's good luck charm, holding up the two hound dogs.



Cake of the month: Rev. Douglas and Dana Rollwage celebrated their 25th anniversary in September with their children Hannah and Jacob after worship at Zion, Charlottetown.

Had cake lately?

Share your celebrations with the rest of the church.
Send your stories to PnP@presbyterianrecord.ca along with your digital photographs, **300 dpi minimum, high quality JPEGs**.
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To be considered for People and Places, photographs should be sharp and everyone clearly identified. The *Record* reserves the right to reject any photos not of sufficient quality.
Photographs cannot be returned.

SPOTLIGHT



A Guatemalan woman sprays her vegetable plot with an organic, homemade pesticide. Extensive use of chemical pesticides has led to pest resilience, health issues and growing expenses. PWS&D is working with a local partner on a best-practices project which recycles household waste into pesticide and diversifies crop production for a more nutritional diet.

Oro Decision Delayed

Trinity-goers continue to meet; ministers' resignations accepted. BY AMY MACLACHLAN

THE PRESBYTERY OF BARRIE HAS delayed deciding whether to dissolve the congregation of Trinity, Oro, until February. In August, most of the congregation of the church, about 100 kilometers north of Toronto, decided to leave the denomination and form a new non-denominational church.

At a meeting in October, presbytery said it wants the extra time to discern if there are enough people who want to continue a Presbyterian presence in Oro. The delay means Presbyterians at Trinity will continue to meet in the new church, while those joining the new Connexus Community Church will meet in rented space.

The resignations of the ministers, Rev. Carey Nieuwhof and Rev. Patrick Voo, were accepted as of Oct. 31 by presbytery in September.

While issues of theology didn't arise at the October meeting, in September, Nieuwhof admitted he was "not comfortable in Presbyterian skin anymore," noting recent debates about same-sex marriage, the authority of Scripture, and whether Jesus is the only path to salvation. "My departure is inevitable."

Nieuwhof said countless organizational tasks now await him and his staff, including finding 450 volunteers to launch Connexus, and leaving Trinity in "the best shape possible" for the continuing congregation. He said $50,000 has already been donated to the new ministry from members of his congregation.

"About two-thirds of our congregation was not here when we moved into the Trinity building," Nieuwhof said in an interview. "People are tingling with excitement, knowing they're part of something new. It's their turn to step up and take their part in shaping this part of the journey."

Trinity was formed from a former three-point charge in 2000 under Nieuwhof's leadership. He had arrived in 1995. The church's mission soon developed an evangelical focus, attracting

the unchurched, with up to 800 people attending each Sunday, some travelling more than 90 minutes to do so.

Trinity's leadership team first approached presbytery with plans to set up a multi-site ministry—or satellite churches—in July 2006.

The idea of actually leaving the denomination didn't surface publicly until a few months ago. Nieuwhof has said it could take years for such a proposal to come to fruition within the Presbyterian Church, although presbytery officials were open to the satellite concept.

"If we could think more about creating space for God's kingdom, and space for innovation, I think we'd all be further ahead," said Nieuwhof, while reflecting on the past year. "We need a chance not just to dream, but to realize those dreams in a flexible and timely manner."

As reported in the October *Record*, a congregational meeting was held in August, at which 97 per cent of the nearly 400 people in attendance voted to leave. Given the size of the congregation, however, Presbytery wondered how others felt about the split. They voted then to delay decisions about the congregation's future until the October meeting, naming Rev. Dr. Neal Mathers of Emmanuel, Nottawa, as interim moderator.

On Oct. 1, 36 people met with Mathers to discuss a continuing Presbyterian congregation. Others responded by email. Mathers told presbytery he sensed "frustration, sadness and dismay" that things have happened so quickly and that the focus for Trinity's leadership moved from discussions about satellite ministry to leaving the denomination entirely—without the congregation being informed of the change until the meeting in August.

Mathers said many questions were raised, including how a remaining congregation could carry the costs of maintaining the building, pegged at about $110,000 annually. That includes payments on the approximate $500,000 mortgage but does not cover staff or programming.

While Trinity has paid this year's principle on the mortgage, the remaining congregation will have to make interest payments of $2,700 a month. Presbytery was told that Trinity's building fund (created when the 18,000-square-foot facility was built three years ago) will likely cover costs in the interim.

'It's regrettable that Trinity was in such a rush and would not let the matter of satellite ministry be explored through the process and time that our polity demands'—Rev. Peter Ruddell

"We didn't set out to build a building, but to start a mission," Nieuwhof told presbytery. "We're not dependent on keeping this building." Nieuwhof said if Trinity is dissolved in February, Connexus might re-examine the prospect of buying it from the denomination. Nieuwhof and his team had previously offered $506,000 for the building.

The current facility is valued at about $1.6 million. Besides the funds raised from selling the three former church properties, Canada Ministries gave Trinity a non-repayable grant for $135,000. The Presbyterian Church Building Corporation guaranteed the Royal Bank Mortgage, which still has $464,000 outstanding. There are two smaller loans. A private trust from an estate is owed about $63,000 and the national church lending fund is owed about $46,000.

Rev. Keith Boyer was named co-interim moderator (along with Mathers) and an assessor session of three people from other congregations was appointed to study the issue further and present their findings in February. The session will remain active until there is a viable continuing congregation to elect its own elders, or until the congregation is dissolved by presbytery.

"This has not been an easy time," said Mathers, who thanked Trinity's leadership for their assistance over the last month. "But I believe [Nieuwhof and his leadership team] are people of honesty and integrity, and they have my blessing."

"The fields are ripe for the harvest, so we have to do it now," said Dianne Hibranth, a Trinity member and former member of the original three-point charge. "We're excited about expanding our ministry, even if that means walking away from the building. We leave with anticipation of what God has in store. God has called us, and He will provide."

Authority for assets and liabilities lies with the trustee board of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. If the congregation is dissolved next year, assets and liabilities would become the responsibility of the trustee board. If a Presbyterian congregation continues, it will retain the assets and liabilities. The church's chief financial officer, Stephen Roche, and principal clerk Stephen Kendall, have met with presbytery and Trinity's leadership team several times. The trustee board has said it will not entertain any offers until (and if) the congregation is dissolved.

"We don't know if six, 60 or 600 people will meet," said Jim Sitler, presbytery clerk. "But more importantly, will there be a desire for continued ministry in this area? That's where the numbers will make a difference. We have a responsibility to any remaining Presbyterians. We can't just turn and walk away."

"It's regrettable that Trinity was in such a rush and would not let the matter of satellite ministry be explored through the process and time that our polity demands," said Peter Ruddell, a retired minister asked by presbytery to attend the congregational meeting to answer questions on the voting process, speaking after the September presbytery meeting.

After Nieuwhof thanked the court for its grace and blessings, Sitler thanked Carey for his friendship, noting he will be praying for all involved. "I have seen divisions before, even divisions that split families apart. But God's work can grow out of that. Wherever God leads you as a congregation, whether here or another building, or to no building, in the long run, it doesn't matter. Just serve Christ!" ■

Education is Catalyst for Change

Toronto mission helps young people go to college. BY AMY MACLACHLAN

WHEN FEWER THAN 25 PER CENT OF youth in one of Toronto's most poverty-stricken neighbourhoods apply to college or university, it's easy to understand why the Yonge Street Mission is promoting education. The mission's scholarship program is helping 25 Toronto youth receive post-secondary education this year—and the funds are renewable for up to four years.

"Many recipients have no family support and it is very meaningful for them to hear someone say, 'We believe in you'"



Students in Yonge Street Mission's scholarship program partner with a mentor—like Shahriar Salehuddin and his mentor Andrew Phillips.

"In our community of Regent Park, we know that education can act as a catalyst for change and allow young people to break the cycle of poverty. Without further education many doors remain closed and our youth may end up trapped in low-paying, dead-end jobs," said Barbara Walkden, YSM's director of development. To receive a scholarship, youth must demonstrate financial need and be nominated by two staff members. "While the money is very important, the expression of confidence from mission staff may be even more valuable," said Walkden. "Many recipients have no family support and it is very meaningful for them to hear someone say, 'We believe in you.'" At a special dinner in August, those students taking multi-year education programs were awarded laptops donated by Dell Computers.

The mission also offers early and sustained support for children through preschool programs, homework clubs and computer classes, and training and employment support for homeless youth through the Evergreen Centre for Street Youth, which is headed up by Presbyterian Karen Bach.

YSM has served Toronto for 110 years, with 140,000 visits each year. For more information, visit www.ysm.on.ca. ■ *–AM*

New Mission Coordinator Named

LINDSEY HEPBURN IS THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH'S NEW Mission Interpretation Coordinator. The Glenview, Toronto, member is a Dalhousie graduate with an honours degree in International Development and Spanish. Hepburn has participated in a few short term mission programs and brings great enthusiasm to developing this portfolio. The mission interpretation coordinator helps congregations experience mission by facilitating short term mission trips, study tours and volunteer experiences in Canada and overseas for congregations and individuals; connecting mission speakers with congregations, including international staff, short term volunteers, participants in study tours, and national church staff; and preparing resource material to help congregations and individuals learn how they can do mission at home, nationally and internationally. Hepburn started in September, replacing Barbara Nawratil who has moved into the finance office. ■

Vermigli Remembered

THIRTY INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARS met at Presbyterian College, Montreal, in August to discuss the life and work of Italian Reformer Peter Martyr Vermigli. The conference was scheduled to recognize the 50th anniversary of Prof. Joseph McLelland's pioneer study, *The Visible Words of God: The Sacramental Theology of Peter Martyr Vermigli*, and the 30th anniversary of the conference which established the Peter Martyr Library in 1977. This series of English translations has published nine of 12 volumes, with a second series of 12 planned.

The opening day speaker was Dr. Mariano di Gangi whose 1949 Presbyterian College thesis was the first modern research on Vermigli. McLelland gave the closing address. William Klempa (A Classical Christology) and Dan Shute (Theodicy) were two other Canadian Presbyterians to deliver papers at the conference, which was partially funded by the Priscilla and Stanford Reid Trust. ■

Museum Open on Sundays

THE NATIONAL PRESBYTERIAN MUSEUM, which is celebrating its fifth anniversary this year, is open Sunday afternoons until Dec. 16. The museum stores over 400 years of artifacts from the Presbyterian Church including missionary memorabilia, Communion tokens, books and clerical robes. It also features a reproduced minister's study with numerous out-of-print books including writings by John Calvin and *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, published in 1608. A small 19th-century chapel, featuring oil lamps and a pump organ, provides a place for groups to worship while stepping back in time. Admission is free though donations are appreciated. To make an appointment call 416 469-1345, or email presbymuseum@sympatico.ca. The museum is located at 415 Broadview Ave., Toronto. ■



Nearly 30 per cent of CFGB grain has gone to Ethiopia through food-for-work programs.

The One-Millionth Tonne

CFGB celebrates years of faithful service.

AFTER 24 YEARS OF HELPING TO FIGHT hunger around the world, Canadian Foodgrains Bank has distributed its one-millionth tonne of food. That's enough to fill more than 15,000 box cars with bags of grain—a train that would stretch approximately 290 kilometres.

"This is a significant milestone for us," said Jim Cornelius, CFGB's Executive Director. "A million tonnes of food is enough to provide a full ration of cereals, pulses and oil to over 66 million people for one month. That's twice the population of Canada, or one percent of the world's population."

Since its inception in 1983, the organization has supported food, agriculture and nutrition programming in 74 countries.

Earlier this summer, CFGB celebrated more good news, when it was announced that the Canadian International Development Agency had signed a five-year agreement that increases annual funding to CFGB from $16 million to $20 million. The Foodgrains Bank also welcomed two new members (Anglican and Roman Catholic) to its team, bringing the total number of church-based agencies involved to 15, including the Presbyterian Church.

"There are a lot of reasons to celebrate," says Rev. Rick Fee, CFGB's board chair. "We have increased our strength by adding new members and new funding, and we are confident that millions more people will benefit in the future. Today we congratulate staff, volunteers, donors, and partners for their hard work and dedication. We remain committed to the task of ending hunger."■ *–CFGB*



Ordaining African Women

WARC follows up on progress. BY J. DORCAS GORDON

A CONSULTATION ON GENDER, POWER and leadership, sponsored in part by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, was held in Kenya over the summer. I was privileged to participate, along with 48 others from 17 countries, including seven students from St. Paul's United Theological College (the other co-sponsor) in Kenya.

It is anticipated that this will be a first step in the development of a global project to provide resources to WARC member churches; particularly, but certainly not exclusively, for those churches that are at various stages in the decision-making process concerning women's ordination.

The consultation began with case studies from Hungary, Taiwan, Zambia, Korea, Argentina and the United States in which participants spoke of their churches, their culture and themselves. Each identified in different, yet surprisingly similar ways, challenges to shared leadership. These stories were powerful reminders once again not only of the diversity of culture and race, but also of the different economic, social and ecclesial circumstances within the Reformed family.

These stories were powerful reminders once again not only of the diversity of culture and race, but also of the different economic, social and ecclesial circumstances within the Reformed family

In the closing session, participants committed themselves to pursue five aspects that all agreed were most prominently related to issues of gender, power and leadership: racial and ethnic identity; the use of the Bible and theology to discriminate against women's leadership; cultural identity; globalization; and leadership.

The second part of this visit took me to Eldoret, Kenya, where I was part of a small team that met with the leadership of the Reformed Church of East Africa (RCEA). The purpose of our visit was to follow up on RCEA women who had received scholarships awarded by WARC to advance women's ordination in the churches of the South. Since recent information on the RCEA women who had graduated and were ready for ordination was limited, the Theological

Education Fund for Women in the South was reluctant to provide more scholarship money until it was clear that the church was proceeding, as indicated in letters of commitment, to ordain qualified women.

We were warmly greeted by the synod executive, presbytery moderators, clergy, women graduates and leaders in the women's organization. A paper was presented by one of the women graduates providing a helpful timeline of the history of the decision-making process. The discussions were cordial, and the team was encouraged by the fact that 22 women were now preparing for ordained ministry. A proposed timeline indicated that the RCEA anticipated having a favourable decision on women's ordination by the end of 2008.

We visited one of the churches nearby where we were welcomed by the minister, elders, women leaders and church members. Their response was uniformly positive to women in the pulpit. They informed us that women were preaching regularly in many congregations given the shortage of ordained ministers.

The team met separately with the women who had graduated from the Reformed Institute for Theological Training, many of whom had also graduated with theological degrees from St. Paul's or were presently students. We were impressed with their gifts, their sense of call and their patience. They remain committed to the process of ordination in spite of the obstacles and delays that are stalling their full participation in the ordained ministry of this church. ■

J. Dorcas Gordon is the Principal of Knox College, Toronto.

Birney Honoured for Saving Lives

THE MAN WHO FOUGHT CEASELESSLY TO HAVE A SUICIDE BARRIER ERECTED over one of Toronto's most notorious bridges was honoured by the city with a memorial plaque in July. Al Birney, who died of a heart attack in June, 2006, was described by his friend Rev. Greg Dickson, as "absolutely sold out for Christ. He didn't care what people thought. He just wanted everyone to know that Jesus was foremost in his life." The two participated in a weekly men's prayer group at St. Andrew's, Scarborough.

The Luminous Veil—as the barrier is known—on the Bloor-Danforth Bridge was dubbed a "suicide magnet" which has witnessed over 400 deaths since it was built in 1919.

Birney had a son who suffers from schizophrenia, and he knew the cost of mental illness. After hearing a woman's story whose son jumped from the bridge, he took it upon himself (along with friend Michael McCamus) to convince City Hall to construct a barrier that would prevent anyone else from jumping. The $6-million project took more than five years to be approved, but when it was, the City of Toronto gave both men a Public Service Award. The veil was completed in 2003.

"He touched a lot of people," said Dickson, noting that Birney's deeply personal humility is something he will always remember. "God's spirit shone through everything he did, and it convicted every heart, and eventually, City Council."

Birney was a member of St. Stephen's, Scarborough, and later moved to St. Andrew's in the same city. His brother, Rev. Dr. Russell Birney, was Moderator of the Presbyterian Church Ireland in 2002. ■ *–AM*

BUILDING HOPE

The sun was shining and the drums were singing. With great excitement, everyone gathered at the front doors of Anishinabe Place of Hope - Endaayaang. It was **Dedication Day.** The Aboriginal elders spoke with solemnity. The clergy blessed the House, dedicated it to the glory of God and prayed that it would provide hope for those in need.

WICM

The politicians brought greetings and called the new building a Place of Beauty. The architect, consultant and builder spoke movingly and said it was their most important project.

Then Cheryl, a woman who had lived on the streets, hesitantly stepped forward to read her poem. She told those assembled of her joy and hope for the future as she takes up residence in **Anishinabe Place of Hope - Endaayaang.**

It was a day of happiness and new beginnings.

GLORY BE TO GOD.

Winnipeg Inner City Missions Of The Presbyterian Church In Canada

P. O. Box 2444, Station Main
Winnipeg, MB R3C 4A7

Flora House 204-586-5494

Anishinabe Fellowship Centre
204-942-8682

Charitable registration: #862942554RR0001



Religious Freedoms

ENI—**LIBYA**—"People are respecting us. They accept us. We are free," said Roman Catholic Bishop Giovanni Martinelli of growing religious freedom in Libya. For three decades, following the 1969 revolution led by Moammar Gadhafi, the tiny Christian community in this overwhelmingly Muslim country faced restrictions and hostility. But a new wave of religious freedom is sweeping the country.

Most worshippers are Africans, mainly illegal migrants, and Asians, and Martinelli now celebrates three services in different languages every Friday, as the Muslims go to their mosques.

PAKISTAN—Bombs and threats continue against Christians in Pakistan, particularly in the troubled North West Frontier Province, which borders Afghanistan.

"These incidents indicate that Christians are included in the targets of the terrorist groups," the commission said in a statement following a September bomb blast in Bannu, one of the province's main districts.

More than 95 per cent of Pakistan's 165 million population are Muslims. Christians account for more than three million people.

SRI LANKA—Christian groups have joined with non-governmental organizations to warn about the killing of religious leaders and attacks on places of worship during a resurgence of fighting between government and rebel forces in Sri Lanka.

"We call on the government as well as all armed groups to respect places of religious worship as places of refuge and 'zones of peace,'" urged 18 action groups in a statement sent to the UN Human Rights Council which met in Geneva in September.

MIDDLE EAST—The annual U.S. State Department Report on International Religious Freedom reported in September a worsening of conditions in the Middle East.

In Iran, government actions "created a threatening atmosphere" for non-Shiite religious groups, Christians and Jews, the report said.

Conditions for religious freedoms have also worsened in war-torn Iraq, with the ongoing insurgency "significantly" harming the ability of people to practice their faith, the report asserted.

Respect for religious freedom has "declined," in Egypt the report said, citing a court ruling that reinstated a policy not to provide a legal means for converts from Islam to Christianity to amend their civil records.

Saudi Arabia's religious freedom, the report said, remained "severely restricted." But it added, "There were positive developments which could lead to important improvements in the future."

In Eritrea, religious freedom "deteriorated further," the report said, noting that many hundreds of religious detainees continue to be held without due process.

Afghanistan was criticized for condemnations of conversions from Islam, and censorship that stifled minority religions.

CHINA—The report highlighted the situation in China, which reportedly expelled more than 100 foreign missionaries in the spring of 2007 in what the report said had been described by some non-governmental groups as a "coordinated government campaign" ahead of the 2008 Olympics.

The State Department designated eight nations as "countries of particular concern" for restrictions on religious freedom: China, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Myanmar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and Uzbekistan.

Lay leader lauded

ENI—Claire Randall, a lay Presbyterian leader and the first woman to serve as general secretary of the US National Council of Churches, is being remembered for her leadership of the council during a turbulent era.

"Looking back on those days, it is especially obvious that her leadership skills and clear vision were those of a woman chosen by God 'for a time such as this,'" said Rev. Michael E. Livingston, the current president of the US council, after the announcement of Randall's death, at the age of 91, in September.

She served as the NCC's general secretary from 1974 to 1984. In her last years at the council, Randall faced a controversy involving a broadcast by the CBS news program 60 Minutes and later in *The Reader's Digest* over allegations that the NCC and the World Council of Churches were committed to leftist political agendas.

She was the fourth general secretary of the NCC.

Yoga not Christ-like

ENI—Leaders of Britain's Hindu community are expressing disbelief and outrage at claims by two English church ministers that yoga should be banned from churches. Amarjeet-singh Bhamra, a Hindu spokesperson in Britain said, "It is very disappointing that such medieval-like irrational prejudice is still allowed to flourish in the Christian church in 21st century multicultural Britain."

The controversy began when a yoga teacher was banned from holding classes in two church halls in Taunton, in southwest England. She had been using a Baptist church hall.

"We are a Christian organization," Baptist Rev. Simon Farrar was quoted as saying by *The Times,* "and when we let rooms to people we want them to understand that they must be fully in turn with our Christian ethos."

Anglican Rev. Tim Jones said, "Yoga has its roots in Hinduism. It may appear harmless or even beneficial, but it is encouraging people to think that there is a way to wholeness of body and mind through human techniques." ■

Brand Me!

There's a huge difference between a red and a blue car. BY ANDREW FAIZ

Can you buy a better car than a Honda Civic? Or for that matter a Toyota Corolla? I don't know if you can. For approximately $15k you get a really decent car—four wheels plus a steering wheel, comfortable seating, a decent trunk, pretty good fuel efficiency and intermittent windshield wipers. For roughly the same amount of money you can get a Pontiac G5 or Vibe or a Kia Rio5. There are equally fine cars in that price range offered by Chrysler, Mazda and Ford. The Ford Focus is a perfectly acceptable choice.

The Focus, for example, puts out 136hp@6,000rpm and 133lb./ft.@4,500rpm of torque; plus, it has 5-speed manual transmission, stainless steel exhaust, anti-roll bar, remote keyless entry, cup holders, vanity mirrors, driver's footrest, Mp3 capability, 40.7 inches of front leg room, 47.9 inches of rear hip room, variably intermittent wipers and a clock. That's a lot of stuff (and I left most of it out, 'cause, you know, I also do editing) for under $20,000.

So, let me ask differently: Can you buy a better car than a Ford Focus? A 100 years of engineering, design, safety, efficiency and a whole bunch of other things I know little about, have gone to create this fine automobile. I don't see how anybody could make a better car than that—or a Civic, or a Corolla or a Vibe.

In fact, why make a Corolla when the Civic is so perfect? Or why bother with Civics when Vibes are the tops? Well, I suppose I want choices in my life. Choice is the semblance of democracy, of autonomy, of free will. After all, the thing that makes the West a great place to be is our options to choose our own destiny. I see images of people in developing worlds and they look the same: the same kinda hat, the same long shirt and loose pants. They're dressing the same way they have in their habitats for centuries. What they need is a little splash of Ralph Lauren and Versace. But, its not gonna happen, 'cause they aren't free, not the way we are.

Back when I was a kid they used to tell us how the Communists longed to have different kinds of bread, of clothes, of comforts. We have choices; and we can choose between a Corolla and a Civic; more importantly we can choose to have neither, ride our bikes and take public transit and rent autos when we finagle our way into somebody's cottage. And, the truth is, there's a huge difference between a Corolla and a Civic.

Is there? Sure! Just the same way there's a huge difference between a red car and a blue one. The difference is in how it makes me, the driver, the owner, feel. Because the car, like my clothes, my haircut, my shoes, my house and my music is an accessory of me. Choice is about Brand Me!

Why make a Corolla when the Civic is so perfect? Why bother with Civics when Vibes are the tops? Well, I suppose I want choices in my life. Choice is the semblance of democracy, of autonomy, of free will

And that is why there are so many different kinds of car, at different price levels, because it's all in aid of me deciding who I am. A woman working checkout at the local grocery store may not be able to afford a Honda Accord (starting at $20k) but once she gets her medical degree she's unlikely to drive something that humble.

Like any successful drug dealer, she'd know that if you want to scream your status, you must get a Beemer or a Benz. An entry level BMW starts at $35k; bragging rights aren't cheap, and anyways, Brand Me is always worth it. That extra bit of loose change might buy you "double VANOS steplessly variable valve timing," but, whatever. Nobody needs a Hummer, the same way nobody needs more car than a Civic. But you can't go to a squash game in a Lada. Brand Me would never stand for it, because Brand Me needs other brands to keep it aloft. That's why Brand Me needs the semblance of choice; no matter how bogus. ■

PRAYER and VIOLENCE

The separation barrier that runs around Israel destroys the soul on both sides. BY DOUG LACHE



An Israeli soldier, tired of being pelted with rocks (see the debris at his feet) gets ready to fire rubber bullets at some boys near the Qalandiya checkpoint, which is on the road from Palestinian Ramallah to Jerusalem.

PHOTOS BY DOUG LAGWE

Record readers first met Doug Lackie in the April issue as he was anticipating his work as an Ecumenical Accompanier serving on the World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Program in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI). The following are excerpts from his reports during his time in Israel this Spring. The opinions expressed are Mr. Lackie's.

THE FIRST 10 DAYS HAVE BEEN FILLED with training by the permanent staff of EAPPI and the departing EAs from whom we take over. I am joined with five other EAs from South Africa, Sweden, Norway and Scotland.

Our tasks require us to monitor activities at four checkpoints at the separation wall. EAs monitor the delays that Palestinians experience at crossings, a common occurrence, and try to assist Palestinians who may be having difficulties with the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). For example, a West Bank Palestinian might be in need of medical care but not have a pass to enter Jerusalem. In the event the person is being transported in an ambulance, we would discuss the medical need with soldiers to let them pass because of humanitarian reasons, which may or may not guarantee passage. Women have been known to give birth at checkpoints.

Twice weekly we go to Hebron in the bus that picks up patients and brings them to the hospital. It is important to understand that as a result of the fighting and the wall, Palestinians are enclosed by the wall and do not have free movement within their own territory.

We are active in two refugee camps, working in the schools in various roles, including working with students to improve their English, plus recreational activities. Shuafat Camp was built in 1967 to accommodate people dispossessed from homes in Jerusalem during the Seven Day War. Originally designed for 20,000, people today there are an estimated 30,000 people crammed into one square kilometre. I can only describe it as a slum: there is a 60 to 70 per cent unemployment rate, and much suffering from the crime that poverty generates.

The Israeli people I encountered vary greatly from the leftists who are opposed to the occupation of the West Bank, and support withdrawal from the West Bank of the Israeli Defense Force. Many of these people are very active within a variety of peace organizations. Conversely the right wing Zionists would like to drive the 3.5 million Palestinians from the West Bank. Most Israelis are somewhere between these two poles.

The bad joke going around is that Jesus would return to Israel but would not be able to get a visa from the government.

EVERY FRIDAY FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS, the villagers of Bil'In have been demonstrating against the fence that now separates them from 60 per cent of their farmland. As quickly as they arrive, the IDF responds with tear gas, stun grenades and a water cannon. Bil'In, a small village of 1,200 people, is 12 kilometres from Ramallah, the Palestinian city that sits right next to Jerusalem. The villagers claim their land has been fraudulently taken. Police are investigating but the villagers don't expect redress.

Villagers claim their land has been fraudulently taken. Police are investigating but villagers don't expect redress

Along with four other EAs, I attend a two-day conference on "work site of shame—the apartheid wall." Speakers include an Israeli Knesset member and Mairead Corrigan Maguire, Irish Nobel Peace Prize recipient.

Also with us are some members of SABEEL, a Palestinian Christian organization, which is funded by our church through the ecumenical group KAIROS.

Two hundred people, mostly internationals, joined the villagers in the protest. We walked to the fence a kilometre away to have a press conference with the international press, but we did not get to the fence as the IDF greeted us with tear gas. It was windy, so the tear gas was ineffective and we were able to dodge the clouds with only slight discomfort. One woman was slightly injured by a rubber bullet. ➤

Top: **Friday, 2pm, Qalandiya. As a sermon is broadcast six Palestinians pray by the roadside.** Bottom: **Paris Square, West Jerusalem. This Israeli chapter of Women in Black (an Argentinean movement) has gathered every Friday since 1998. The woman looking at the camera is a magistrate from England serving as an Ecumenical Advisor.**




STOP
THE
OCCUPATION

NANCY IS SEVEN YEARS OLD and her sister Jane is six. Their parents are Israeli. They are separated and their father has custody after many complications in court. In a matter of a few months, the girls' dad found he could not cope with the children on his own. Arrangements were made to give legal custody to Sister Maria, a young, warm, loving nun in her 30s who runs a 12-bed boarding and day school operated by the Russian Orthodox Church for children in Bethany, which is about to become a West Bank town separated from Jerusalem by the wall.

The construction of the wall is catching up to Nancy and Jane. As Israelis, they have an official status that necessitates them to live within Israel. The court officials say they cannot continue to live with Sister Maria in her boarding school. Maria told me of the difficult adjustment these two small girls experienced when they arrived in her care two years ago. Nancy and Jane now feel at home and are happy. The girls' relationship to Maria is like that of parent and child. As we spoke, Nancy clung to Maria.

In the long term, Nancy and Jane will benefit by being on the Israeli side of the wall. They will go to school or university and will not have to wait in line and suffer the indignity and delays as border police check their baggage and ID. Their education will not be hampered as it is for the children of my friend Dr. Salim, a family doctor living in Shufat Camp, whose daughter Nada attends university and experiences frequent closings at the Shuafat Checkpoint crossing.

SIX ECUMENICAL ACCOMPANIERS TOOK THE BUS TO UMM TUBA (Mother of Heaven), a Palestinian village in the southeast corner of Jerusalem. We were dropped off at a road leading to the town garbage dump. We walked over a rain-soaked mud road for 40 minutes before we reached the small village of Al Nu'Aman. Public school children take this road every day.

Israel wants this village, and I can understand why, as I surveyed the farmland below. To the north is the Israeli settlement Har Homa, a concrete eyesore built on a nature preserve completed in 2000. Considerable pressure to leave has been put on the Palestinian villagers. Once, all the men were rounded up from the 25 families at midnight, taken to a checkpoint and told they should leave. The house next to Miriam and her husband Joseph was bulldozed on the premise that it did not have a building permit—but the owners still have to pay a monthly tax on their demolished home.

For the first time in my life I was given sheep's milk to drink. This all came about when Miriam milked her ewe as we watched, and then boiled the milk. Actually, I must say it was very pleasant.

A few weeks later we accompanied the male members of the village to the Israeli Supreme Court where a judgment was given to the government to either give the residents Jerusalem I.D. or move the fence to contain the village within the West Bank.

PEOPLE TRAVELING FROM RAMALLAH TO JERUSALEM have to pass the Qalandiya checkpoint. A woman from Gaza who had been in Ramallah for a heart operation was not allowed to cross because her visitor's pass was expired, since the hospital had kept her an extra day and had not discharged her as originally planned. The appropriate IDF department was contacted but, as frequently happens, did not respond to this special request—even though its office closes at noon for Shabbat and does not reopen until Monday.

Palestinians are enclosed by the wall and do not have free movement within their own territory

The woman had no relatives or friends she could stay with until Monday. A taxi driver picked her up, planning to drive over roads that would avoid checkpoints—a dangerous thing to do. If caught, they could both be arrested. I do not know if he was successful but I suspect he knew what he was doing.

Shortly after this event, six EAs—three from Bethlehem and three of our team in Jerusalem—joined in a bicycle fun race from Ramallah to Jericho, a distance of about 50 kilometres. They did not get far; at about five kilometres the border police set up a flying checkpoint and stopped the whole event on the grounds of security. The group was mainly made up of Palestinians along with some Israelis and internationals. They argued and pleaded; one international was arrested and later released, but no bike race.

QALANDIYA. FRIDAY, 10 A.M. A West Bank ambulance pulls up with a wheelchair patient. For some reason, this ambulance



Men going to work wait to enter a checkpoint in the Abu Dis area, east of West Jerusalem.

is not allowed to drive through to Jerusalem. The patient is transferred to another ambulance.

I photograph the patient transfer and am immediately approached by a policeman with two soldiers. I am told to stop photographing and to move from the parking lot to the sidewalk. I respond that taking a picture is not illegal. The policeman answers that I may photograph, but from the sidewalk, because he is responsible for my safety. I walk to the sidewalk, he says: "Have a good day," and I continue to take pictures.

2 p.m. A sermon is being broadcast from a mosque a kilometre away. Six Palestinians—three men and three women—start to pray in the parking lot. They are not facing east as I would expect, but west towards Jerusalem. Press and TV reporters are present and a photo-op is underway. On completion of their prayers the press deserts them, so I approach and ask what they prayed to God for. One of the women spoke some English. Her reply was militant: "We are not afraid of these people, I want to go to Jerusalem as I wish."

2.30 p.m. Five teenage boys appear, their heads popping up and down over the crest of a hill not 50 yards away. I am standing close to an Israeli armoured vehicle; a piece of cement block lands close by. It is time to move to safety, where the press are. More young men appear and throw rocks at the additional military vehicles that have appeared. No reaction from the Israeli soldiers as they sit in their vehicles.

Enough is enough: out of the vehicles the soldiers appear, poised for action. These Palestinian boys know when to attack and when to retreat. After many rubber bullets are fired and tear gas bombs explode, the boys run away. No one is hurt on either side and the skirmish is over until next Friday after prayers.

There are two situations addressing the occupation, one of prayer and one of violence. Prayer may bring about peace in God's good time but violence feeds the hate; it also destroys the soul.

Assalaamu alaykum.

Shalom. ■

Doug Lackie is a member of Claude, Caledon, Ont. He can be reached at dlackie@zing-net.ca



Faith on the Battlefield

The Ninetieth anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge. BY DR. TOM HAMILTON

"To me there is still a mystique about Vimy Ridge... I think it is because Vimy was and is a symbol."
Lieutenant Gregory Clark

At 5:30 a.m. on April 9, 1917, Lieutenant Gregory Clark ordered his men to follow him up the slope of Vimy Ridge, in northern France, to attack the jagged trenches of the German defenders. "In a sleet and snow blizzard our artillery erupted ... Behind the wall of fire we floundered up the ruined, filthy slope ... My battalion reached the crest at 7:05 a.m. ... I was the only surviving officer," he recalled nearly half a century later in a magazine article. The Canadians had accomplished what the British, French and Morrocan armies had been unable to achieve despite two and a half years of battle and 40,000 casualties. The Canadians had captured nine miles of coveted high ground in the famed Hindenburg Line.

The Canadian victory at Vimy Ridge has been described as a national coming of age. It marked the first time four Canadian divisions had fought together, and was the first major Allied victory of the war. The Vimy Memorial was dedicated on July 26, 1936. Recently, it was extensively restored to celebrate the 90th anniversary.

Vimy became a symbol of faith for many religious-minded Canadians during the Great War. As Gregory Clark noted, "and I thought it was symbolic that we had done it at Easter." Many soldiers believed that their Christian faith sustained their morale, providing solace and focus. As Private Benjamin F. MacDonald wrote in a letter to his wife, "The fighting is going on very hard, but God is good to me, and I tell you it is out here that we know there is a God." Lieutenant Robert Horne agreed and credited his faith as



The 29th Battalion, part of the Second Canadian Division, advances through German barbed wire and heavy fire on April 9, 1917.

essential to his well-being. To his grandmother, he wrote, "I am truly thankful I got out of it with my life saved ... the lessons that were taught by mother and yourself have never left me and have led me to stand for my Master ... I say these things that other young men [might] grasp the full joy and benefit of a life whose soul is Christ."

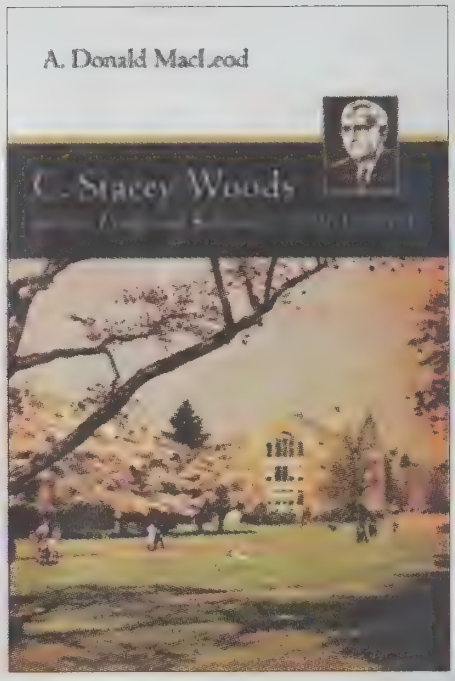
Faith also connected Canadians in France with their loved ones back home. Prior to the battle of Vimy Ridge, Lt. Earl Gordon Richards wrote to his wife, Alicia, "I bend two knees to God, one to my king, but I leave my heart all with you. I can understand now how love takes first place. It is because God is love." In response Alicia wrote, "When this war is over and all is back to normal again we mustn't forget Him ... What do riches amount to or success if we do not enjoy the love and comfort and help of our Father in Heaven ... I am ready to face together what may come, and loving one another deeply, very deeply."

Richards never read those words from his wife. On the night of March 30, 1917, while leading a reconnaissance patrol he was wounded and died the next day of "night chill" (infection). He was one of the 66,655 Canadians who were killed in the First World War, and one of the 3,598 soldiers who died during the battle of Vimy Ridge. His body rests in the shadow of Vimy Ridge at the Ecoivres military cemetery. In the midst of the carnage and horrors of war, faith provided Canadians with a means to sustain their morale, foster their hope and bridge the chasm between the muddy trenches of France and their families in Canada. ■

Dr. Tom Hamilton's Ph.D. thesis, Padres Under Fire, examined the role of Canada's military chaplains.

A Man of Deep Faith

A biography of Stacey Woods provides insight into the evangelical student movement. BY STUART MACDONALD



C. Stacey Woods and the Evangelical Rediscovery of the University,
A. Donald MacLeod

Stacey Woods may be a name you know. He was a crucial leader in the development of the evangelical student movement in Canada, the United States and internationally in the period following the Second World War. Even those of us who didn't instantly recognize the name Woods will know of the organizations which he led—Inter-Varsity in Canada and its sister organization in the United States, and the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students.

Donald MacLeod has given us a richly detailed, well-written biography. Woods was born in Australia in 1909 into a deeply religious family. His father was a Brethren lay preacher and Woods followed his father into ministry but with a somewhat different focus—the University community. Woods studied at the Evangelical Theological College in Dallas before moving to Canada and leading the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship. One of the challenges in recounting this life is that he often held more than one significant position at the same time. He was the General Secretary of IVCF Canada (1934-1952), led the expansion of InterVarsity into the United States and then was in primary leadership in that organization (1940-1960), while at the same time leading the International Federation of Evangelical Students (1947-1972). This overlap caused more difficulties for the organizations he led than it does in the biography. MacLeod skilfully takes us through the various interlinked organizations and Woods' associations with each of them. The book is very detailed—a clear strength to those with long associations with Inter-Varsity. For those less familiar, MacLeod manages not to lose us in these details, but keeps the main storyline moving forward.

The portrait which emerges of Woods is remarkably honest, focusing on both the strengths and weaknesses of his character. He was clearly a man of deep faith, extremely hard-working, a powerful preacher and speaker, a visionary, and deeply committed to the organizations which he led. The international speaking itinerary for various years is exhausting simply to read. It is not surprising that later in life Woods' health suffered from this workload. Another strength which MacLeod highlights is Woods' ability to spot talent and mentor young leaders in the movement. Woods' weaknesses are not glossed over. He seems to have been more of a visionary than an administrator. Given his many speaking engagements and his involvements in more than one organization at a time, it is easy to imagine how details would have slipped and how frustrating working for him on a day-by-day basis might have been. Certain management issues, particularly in InterVarsity in the United States, are also highlighted. There are other places where the weaknesses are more alluded to than clearly spelled out. Woods certainly saw the university campus as a mission field, a place where evangelical Christians needed to be involved. What remains less clear is in what other ways he sought to engage the academic world.

This biography details the life of Woods as well as the various evangelical student organizations with which Woods was involved. For those who were active in Inter-Varsity in high school, university or camping ministry this will be a fascinating account full of recognized names and personalities. Those who were involved in other Christian organizations will find this story less familiar, but no less interesting, as it gives great insight into the development of evangelical student movements in Canada and beyond in the post-Second World War period. ■

Rev. Stuart Macdonald is a professor at Knox College, Toronto.



Life Long Missions

THE POST-CHRISTIAN CHURCH NEEDS A DIFFERENT TYPE OF MINISTER

vancouver

Candidates for ministry in these post-Christian times need to be not only spiritually grounded and prepared to live a Christ-centred life, but also view their vocation as a life-long mission, says Rev. Dr. Stephen Farris, dean of St. Andrews Hall at the Vancouver School of Theology..

A second-generation minister in the church, and its only professor of homiletics (the study of the composition and delivery of a sermon), Farris says the days are gone when his graduates can expect to be pastors of large congregations of committed Christians. In modern society, church attendance isn't considered mandatory.

"I am hoping that our students find that our theology is true, and that God is working in the church and will sustain the church," he says. "There is no question that the culture of Christianity is dying—at least in the traditional sense—so it seems to me that we need to ensure that the students are deeply grounded and rooted in the spirit and in the faith. I don't have any idea about what the future holds, and the

change could be a tough process. I pray that we prepare them for the future of the changing church."

The church has always been a part of Dr. Farris' life. His father, Rev. Dr. Allan Farris, was professor of church history at Knox College, Toronto. A gifted storyteller, he was also a sought-after guest preacher. Often his son would travel with him to hear him preach.

"On the way home in the car, he would ask me about the structure of the sermon, not the content," Dr. Farris recalls. "It meant that I not only had to be listening to the content, I also had to be aware of the process."

Even with such a formidable grounding in the church, Dr. Farris was determined to make a conscious effort not to follow in his father's footsteps.

"It's the question every preacher's kid dreads: 'Are you going to be a minister like your daddy?' It used to make me literally cringe," he says. "In fact, I even did that typical teenage rebellion of staying well away from

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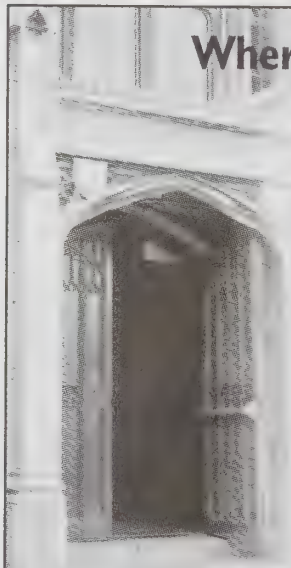
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church. But I got a job at the Scott Mission's summer camp in Toronto."

The camp experience helped form his faith, enabled him to claim it for his own, and helped him hear a distinct call to ministry.

After studying at both Knox College and Union Theological Seminary at the University of Virginia, Farris became a minister in a small mining town in West Virginia.

He came back to Canada in the early 1980s with a young family in tow, and began teaching at Knox College. In 2003, he took up the post of dean at St. Andrews Hall, and the teaching post in homiletics.

"There is no question that we are a demographically challenged church," he says. "But I am not fearful about the future. I know that our students have been claimed by Christ, as I was claimed when I was working at the Scott Mission Camp. They are remarkably gifted for what is a very difficult job."

The Vancouver School of Theology is based at the University of British Columbia, founded on a collaboration of the Anglican, United and Presbyterian traditions. The school offers full-time degree and postgraduate programs, as well as distance learning and a native studies program. For more information about the programs, visit the school's website at www.vst.edu/index.php

All the programs at VST are rooted in the school's mission to educate students not only in the scriptures, but also to be engaged in issues of truth, justice and spiritual growth.

"One of the things we tell our students is that being a Presbyterian minister is a not a sprint—it is a marathon," Farris adds. "There is pleasure and a joy to be with people at the high moments of life, at weddings and baptisms, and helping them through the low moments, during sickness and at death. The students quickly come to understand that they will learn throughout their ministry. We are preparing them for a good start."

toronto

Rev. Dr. Dorcas Gordon, principal and associate professor of biblical interpretation, Knox College, Toronto, says she feels privileged to be preparing people for ministry.

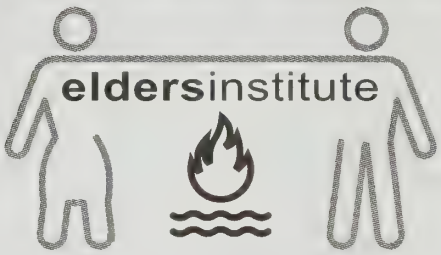
"It is a very exciting time to be in theological education," she says. "The world needs new, fresh minds in ministry. It is very rewarding to be a part of training future leaders for this time in the church. We have a changing mosaic. The challenge is to work together to discern what is best for the new, emerging church. "

Dr. Gordon was born in Ireland, the eldest child of a Presbyterian

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minister. The family immigrated to Canada when she was in elementary school. While she was involved in the church in all the traditional ways, the idea of becoming a minister was a slowly evolving one.

"I was in university when the idea started forming—I felt a tug toward learning about the faith at Knox. I like to say I am a slow learner because even after I graduated, I never really left."

Although he never lived to see her in ministry, her father would have been proud of her decision. Her mother was slightly shocked, but then very proud of her decision to enter the ministry.

In addition to academic achievements, Gordon also spent 10 years in congregational ministry.

"I don't think I could have made any other choice," says Gordon. "Even in my most frustrating and difficult moments, I was always with the church—being in the church always felt right. I think that is the true meaning of the call. I'm where I belong."

Knox College offers several graduate and post graduate programs, as well as distance learning—including the new on-line Master of Divinity program.

Beginning in May 2008, students in the program can complete 30 credits in four years, three of them as part of an online community. In the fourth year, students will spend a year in residence at Knox.

The college also offers a Christian Life certificate program which provides a deeper knowledge of the faith for students who want to work in churches as Christian educators or lay ministers. For more information on Knox College's programs, visit the website at www.utoronto.ca/knox.

"At Knox, we are preparing people to use the gifts God has already given them in a world that really needs them. People are looking for meaning, a spiritual connection and the church needs to be in the forefront. We can't afford to withdraw into ourselves," Gordon says. "Jesus called the disciples, and he continues to call people because he sees something in us that he wants us to use."



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montreal

Dr. John Vissers, principal and faculty lecturer in theology at Presbyterian College, Montreal, says that preparing students for ministry also involves preparing them for mission.

"There is no doubt that some of the students will be going into situations where congregations are struggling on the edge of viability—and that is true of almost all Christian denominations in the not-so-distant future," he says. "We need to teach them about being spiritual leaders, rather than functionaries in maintenance."

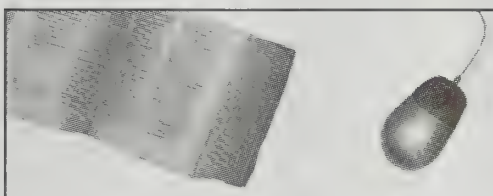
Today's students have a greater understanding of the global church, he adds, and with it, a sense of connection to the wider world. The days are gone when being the

minister in the community came with automatic respect and status. Now, ministers have to work hard at cultivating a rich personal spiritual life as well as leading a congregation.

"It's going to be a changing role for them," he says. "In North America, mainstream Protestantism is in crisis mode, and everyone has an idea about what needs to be done. The real challenge for these new ministers will be to work out what they are called to do and be."

Vissers's family came to the Presbyterian Church from the Dutch Calvinist tradition. Throughout his childhood and teens, he was involved in the life of his church in west-end Toronto and spent seven summers at Glen Mhor Camp in Muskoka on staff.





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"I owned Christ as my own, and made a commitment to Christ, but I wasn't sure what that call meant to me at first," he says. He understood fully one weekend during a Presbyterian Young Peoples' Society gathering.

"It was an almost off-the-cuff remark made by one of the ministers in his final address," Vissers says. "He said something about the church needing new fresh leaders in the future. I heard the confirmation of something that had been rumbling around in my soul."

He was ordained at 23 and moved to a mission appointment in the presbytery of Westminster, B.C. At the end of the two-year appointment, he and his wife decided that if he was going to continue his education "it should be sooner rather than later."

Vissers continued his studies in New Jersey at Princeton Seminary, and did his doctoral studies at the Toronto School of Theology.

Since then, he has moved back and forth from congregational ministry to academia—first at Tyndale University and now at Presbyterian College.

Being comfortable in both fields has helped him gain perspective into the church in both theory and practice.

"I love both contexts," he says. "I have been able to bring the reality of congregational life and share those experiences with the students, and bring the best of my experiences in academy to the congregations."

In addition to graduate and post-graduate degrees in theology, Presbyterian College also offers a diploma of lay leadership. Students complete 20 credits over two to four years in a structured program aimed at better equipping church leaders. For more information, visit the website at www.presbyteriancollege.ca.

Vissers says a cross-section of Canadian society continues to enter theological schools each year, and there is an emerging trend toward younger people coming to study right out of university. He sees in that an echo of that off-the-cuff remark he heard long ago.

"We do need those fresh young minds in the church, and we are starting to see them again," he says. "They have got youth and a lifetime to give to the church."

Nancy Devine is a freelance writer.

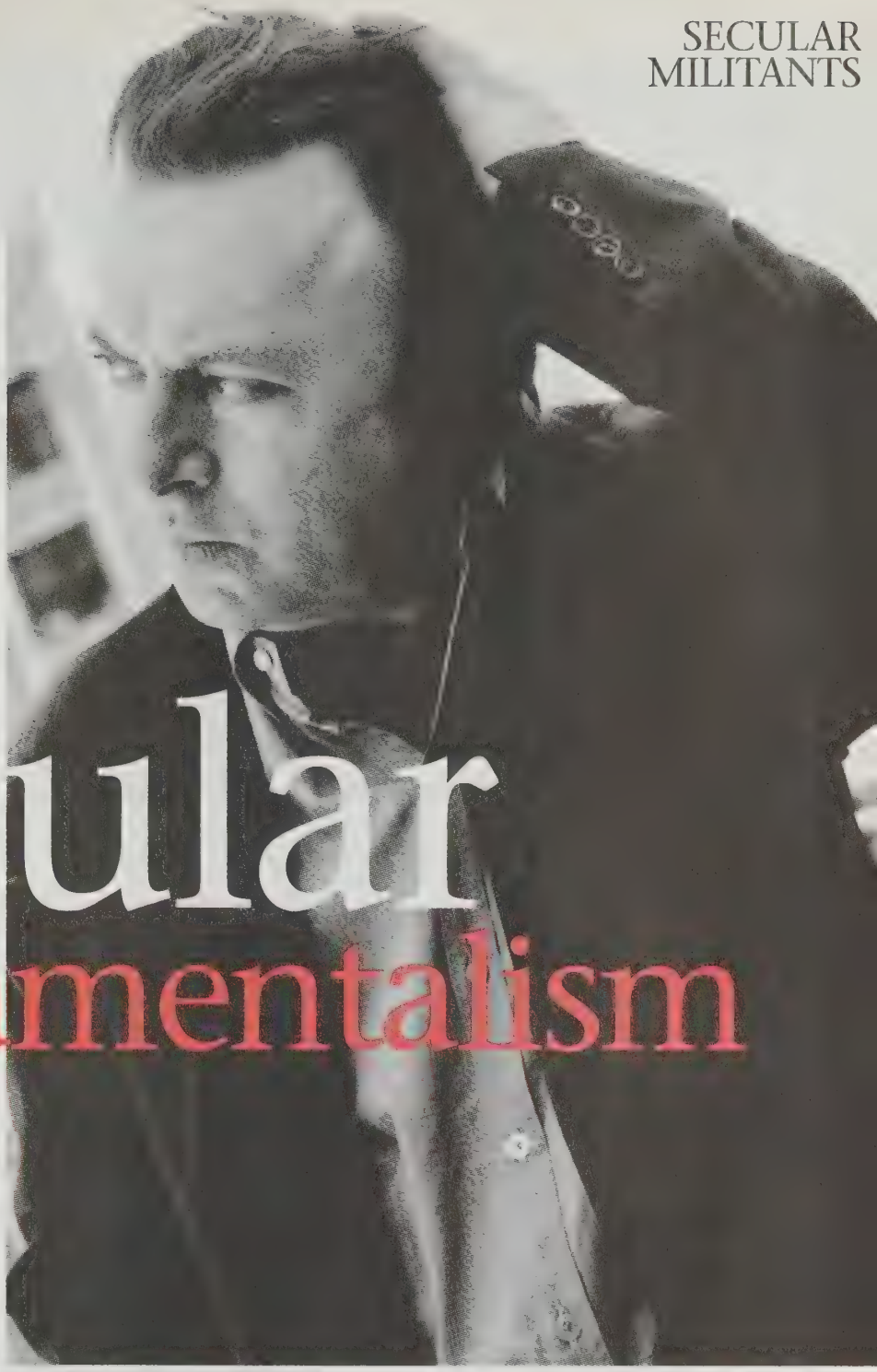
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Secular Fundamentalism

Believing is knowing.

BY JOHN MCTAVISH

Christopher Hitchens

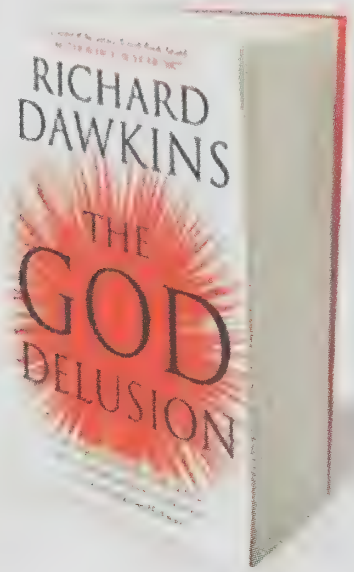
There's been a lot of crazy, even murderous religion in the news lately. Some of it Muslim, some of it Christian, all of it nuts.

And now we're experiencing the backlash. Books like Richard Dawkins's *The God Delusion* and Christopher Hitchens's *God is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* are claiming that religion—all religion—is not only mistaken but downright evil.

Hitchens, the *New Yorker magazine* recently pointed out, is especially provocative. The hard-hitting atheist is quoted as saying: "Creationists are 'yokels,' Pascal's theology is 'not far short of sordid,' the reasoning of the Christian writer C.S. Lewis is 'so pathetic as to defy description,' Calvin was a 'sadist and torturer and killer,' Buddhist sayings are 'almost too easy to parody,' most Eastern spiritual discourse is 'not even wrong,' Islam is 'a rather obvious and ill-arranged set of plagiarisms,' Hanukkah is a 'vapid and annoying holiday,' and the psalmist King David was an 'unscrupulous bandit.'"

Proponents of atheism have always been around. But the rhetoric today has certainly gone up a notch or two, so much so that militant atheists are being called secular fundamentalists.

The label is one that Dawkins in particular resents. "Funda- ➤



God exists, religious believers say in their own interpretation of ultimate reality. And Christians go even further and say that Jesus Christ is the unique revelation of God's love

mentalists know they are right," the British scientist points out in *The God Delusion*, "because they have read the truth in a holy book and they know, in advance, that nothing will budge them from their belief."

But scientists, Dawkins assures us, follow the truth wherever it leads. Scientists change their minds when new truth turns up and re-examine their teachings when a better explanation of old evidence arises.

Well, sure, but as soon as Dawkins says anything about religion, whether for or against, he's no longer talking as a scientist. He's talking as a metaphysician, as someone interpreting ultimate reality in a way that takes us beyond what people can verify with their eyes or ears or hands.

God exists, religious believers say in their own interpretation of ultimate reality. And Christians go even further and say that Jesus Christ is the unique revelation of God's love.

That, of course, is a statement of faith. And like any faith statement it may be wrong. But it's not wrong because of anything science has to say. Science is not talking about God at all. Science is talking about the concrete reality of God's created world.

And even to speak of the reality of the world is to make a highly contentious religious statement. Millions of Hindus and Buddhists, for example, don't believe the world is real at all.

Only Brahman, they claim, is real, Braham being pure, unchanging, impersonal spirit. Everything else, they say, is maya, an illusionary spirit that only has the kind of reality that objects in a dream have for the person dreaming.

The atheist takes his own leap of faith and says there is no God at all. There are no Absolute Standards, just right and wrong with a small r and a small w.

When people do things that the atheist considers wrong (let's say, beating a child to death), they're not doing anything wrong in the strict sense of the word. They're simply doing something the atheist doesn't happen to like.

Fortunately, when it comes to child beating, very few people like that sort of thing. But if they did, the atheist couldn't complain.

Who is there to complain to? Again, there is no Right or Wrong for the atheist. There's just the universe made up of what Bertrand Russell once called "accidental collocations of atoms."

Religious fundamentalists can drive us crazy with their know-it-all approach to God. But secular fundamentalists today are just as cocksure. There's no point arguing with them. Their minds are made up.

Well, okay, I won't argue. I'll just confess my own little faith for what it's worth.

God, I believe, has created the world in which we find ourselves and given it a distinctive reality of its own.

God doesn't interfere in the world, which is kind of scary. If, for example, we decide to kill each other (think of all the wars in history), or kill ourselves (think of our excessive use of fossil fuels today), no glass arm is going to come down from heaven to save us.

On the other hand, if the Creator doesn't interfere in the world of his creation, he still quietly and helpfully intervenes.

In Jesus, God especially draws near, even to the point of sharing our human life, tasting our human joys and terrors, undergoing our human death, and then mysteriously rising again as the sign and promise that nothing can finally separate any of us—believers and unbelievers alike—from God's eternal love.

No, I can't prove it. But I believe it. And nothing the secular fundamentalists are saying these days leads me to believe otherwise. ■

Rev. John McTavish is a freelance writer in Huntsville, Ont.

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A Closed Mind



Atheists take the easy path of attacking everything and defending nothing.

BY W. OWEN THORNTON

Philosopher Karl Popper talks about having an attitude of reasonableness in a debate. The attitude of reasonableness suggests that two combatants come to the table on either side of a debate knowing that they are right, willing to convince the other person they are right, but accepting that the other person has a viable view and that they may have to adopt the opponent's viewpoint. My position is that believers have an attitude of reasonableness. Atheists do not. In fact atheists cannot be reasonable for reasons I intend to explain.

Atheism is not isolated from a belief in God; it is part of a belief in God. Believers sometimes doubt the existence of God. Our doctrine accepts and makes allowance for our disbelief. Even Jesus, God's son, while dying on the cross, lost God. Believers come to the debate understanding the atheist view. Atheists cannot for a moment concede that God might exist because the moment that they do, they become believers. All faith journeys are an exploration of God and it doesn't matter if you believe in God 90 per cent or 10 per cent of the time.

Therefore, an atheist must bring an airtight, closed mind to the debate. There can be no wavering. Yet the moment a believer concedes some point about atheism, the atheist sees a gap and wedges home point after point. Atheists have it easy in this debate. First, they cannot admit the other side has a viable point. Second, it is easier to attack something and defend nothing than it is to defend something and attack nothing.

God is attacked for being improvable, for allowing evil to exist and for being inattentive to the needs of ➤

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We are spiritual creatures and when we ignore believing in something divine and bigger than ourselves we simply miss out on something wonderful

His people. Believers acknowledge these things and have no defense other than, "We're not meant to understand His will." Lame! At this juncture the atheist shouts like the announcer of a European football match, "Gooooooooooooooooo-al!"

Atheists, because they don't have to listen to the counterdebate, are right. They know believers have no viable proof for the existence of God. In the wake of the same ol' boring God litany, the absolutist atheist voice is one that rings loud, long and clear. Next the media runs with a leading atheist theory because slamming God creates controversy and in the secular world controversy sells ... something that should make us dubious! Arguments for God are as old as time and they sell nothing—except a few million Bibles each year!

My greatest proof lies in Jesus. Some deny his existence. Others call him myth. Roman records and Jewish historian Josephus say otherwise. My bend towards atheism stops when I consider Christ. C.S. Lewis said Jesus was either insane, a liar, or who he said he was. Christ himself said that he couldn't be one of Satan's crew, for a house divided could not stand. Therefore seeing as he wasn't tried for insanity, and he spoke the truth, I pick Son of God as my answer. Therefore, God must exist.

Lastly, and this might not be a very good reason to attack atheism or to defend belief, but I simply like the kind of people who, despite the impracticality of belief, still opt to believe. A journey of faith in God and His son the Christ enriches life, whether that belief is justified or provable. I believe we are spiritual creatures and when we ignore believing in something divine and bigger than ourselves, we simply miss out on something quite wonderful. Many things in the world aren't explainable and that fact alone is good enough for the believer to say God exists. I like the "out there" element of faith. It's all a believer requires and it drives the logical atheist wild! ■

Owen Thornton manages the Human Kindness Project, and is an elder in London, Ont.

Blessed by Prayers

There are mysteries that exceed the grasp of the human mind. BY ALLEN AICKEN

St. Columba-By-The-Lake, Montreal, has meant a lot to me. It was the community into which my first-born daughter came to life, and where she was given the new life of baptism. I suppose it was also our "house of prayer," although Presbyterian churches are rarely distinguished as prayer centres. Of course St. Columbans do pray and, like Leap year, prayer occasionally is a topic.

Readers with some longevity in this community will remember a call to prayer some 13 years ago. My daughter, Alexandra (Alex, to all but her father), had been hurt in a traffic accident. I remember the next day, about five in the morning, when I met a surgeon named Wally Temple. He ran through some of her injuries—fractured skull, pelvis, and cheek-bone, and a liver that was pâté (his colourful choice of words!)—and said that he would surgically enter her abdomen and do what he could. Her life hinged on the mending of this internal organ. When he told me her chances were 50-50 I sensed that he was shading his prognosis to give me some hope.

St. Columbans got the news in short order and offered prayers. It surprised and gratified me. The congregation was there for her baptism but said goodbye to her when she was a two-year-old. Our subsequent conversations revealed that this prayerful assurance went much deeper than an idle comment. The prayers in Pointe Claire were said in concert with others, including a brief prayer ritual at her bedside at 9 o'clock each morning. Various friends, some of them clergy, would come into her room for a liturgy at one of the few quiet moments in the Intensive Care Unit.



Evidence of Prayer: Alexandra and child

After a month in Calgary's Foothills Hospital, most of it in ICU, she was released and, shortly thereafter, began university as a somewhat atypical 18-year-old. She went, alone and by plane, still wearing a drainage tube from her liver.

Two years ago in August, Alexandra married Geoff. They live in Calgary. She returned there after graduation to complete her interrupted childhood. Now an X-ray technologist, the idea of working in the hospital where her life had been in the balance, had some appeal. She also wanted to meet Wally Temple again. I understand he is a part of Christ's Body. He's been an advocate of the public health care system. She still works at the hospital and, occasionally, these two people with a special relationship, meet.

This past summer a baby arrived and for Alexandra, telling Temple ➤

the news was an important phase of baby-waiting.

This is a long round-about way of talking about the prayers of St. Columbans. I don't know that I want to pick up the mindless chant "God always answers prayer." (I know that some Christian believers find this an important faith statement. It sometimes sounds to me as if the Creator of the universe is beholden to a slice of world population that is well-to-do, religiously correct, and lives in the western world!) I am persuaded, though, that the prayers people utter tend to whirl around our universe without constraint of time and space ... perhaps a little like comets. They are there, and they have consequences in the mystery of our existence that human beings can never fathom. I know that the prayers of St. Columbans blessed us who watched and waited. I know that Alexandra still retains evidence of those long-ago prayers, both in her files and in her heart ... perhaps even in her body. There are mysteries here that exceed the grasp of my human mind.

I know that Alexandra still retains evidence of those long-ago prayers, both in her files and in her heart ... perhaps even in her body

Recently, I received an email from Alexandra with the subject heading "Wally Temple." I want to share it with you:

"The only way I knew I could tell this guy we're having a baby is to run into him, and I did just that on Wednesday. I was actually going to my old room on unit 102 to do a portable, and he was in the next room chatting with a patient. He had on a Garfield tie and a black jacket and pants (with maybe a hint of navy blue) and chatted with her for quite some time. He said his home number was listed in the phone book and challenged her husband to a re-match of ping-pong. What a swell guy!

"He saw me out of the corner of his eye after I'd been waiting for a few minutes, and said 'Hi, sweetheart, how are you?' He finally came out and asked if I was married yet (I think that's the last time I saw him) and I told him we were having a baby. He started to look kind of misty, patted my belly, and said 'God is on your side.' I kind of got misty too, and feel like my baby has been blessed!" ■

Allen Aicken lives in the Fraser Valley, B.C.

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From Hollywood To Iowa

Prayers are answered, believe it or not.

BY PHIL CALLAWAY



Back when our kids wanted to travel in the same car as their parents, we journeyed three days to get to a camp in Iowa where I was to speak. I've discovered that the best way for a speaker to gain credibility at family camp is to leave his children at home, but ours have always come along. And I think it's been comforting to other parents to watch our children misbehave.

As we sat at dinner the first night, the children horking down corn on the cob, the camp director, Earl, told us a little about the camp. Located on 660 acres of wooded property in Central Iowa, Hidden Acres had experienced significant growth the last few years. But with growth came the usual structural hurdles and the camp staff had been praying that God would supply enough money for a major project. When the money arrived, they hoped to build a sewer so that frightened campers would not have to hike past bears and wolves to use the facilities in the middle of the night. The staff prayed often. But nothing happened.

"We're filming a little movie, and there are more of us. You know, trailers and some equipment. Oh ... and helicopters, too. Is that okay?"

One day a semi-truck crept up the gravel road and a man climbed out. "Do you mind if I park my rig here?" he asked, pointing to a hay field on the southern edge of camp.

Earl, as accommodating a Midwesterner as you'll ever meet, said, "Sure." Soon the truck driver had another question. "We're filming a little movie, and there are more of us. You know, trailers and some equipment. Oh ... and helicopters, too. Is that okay?" ➤

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Accommodating Earl said, "Sure."

The crew was from a little studio out west called Warner Brothers and they had a few more questions. Could they shoot some scenes on a road west of camp? Scatter a little straw? Blow it around? "We'll pay you to clean things up," they promised.

Earl said sure.

Next a helicopter landed in the south field and a bearded man by the name of Steven ducked out of it, with his personal chef. He was producing a little film about a tornado. His name was Steven Spielberg.

Warner Brothers stayed 36 hours on the property filming Twister, paid the staff $1,000 for the three hours it took them to clean up the road, then asked them to put all the trash back on the highway, they needed to shoot the scene again. Of course, Earl said sure.

Before the trucks and helicopters departed, Earl was holding in his hand another cheque. One which made his eyes grow wide. It was for the exact amount they'd been praying for.

A friend rolls his eyes when I mention answered prayer because he is more educated than I, and can put a voice to the "hows" of history. How could a God who answers prayer turn

There is so much I don't understand. But late at night I keep circling back to God's obvious hand on my life in the simple things

a deaf ear while Hitler murdered six million Jews and several million Christians? How could God watch Stalin kill 60 million without doing something? What about the Middle East and Baghdad and Hiroshima?

I don't know quite how to respond. There is so much I don't understand. But late at night I keep circling back to God's obvious hand on my life in the simple things. I have seen him give joy when there is no plausible explanation. When I've been in the back of an ambulance holding the hand of my unconscious wife while nurses cast sideways glances at each other. And I have sensed the peace of knowing His presence though so many things in life do not make sense.

Earl agrees. Ask him if God answers prayer and he'll smile and tell you a story. And he'll probably conclude it this way. "When I got that cheque, I knew what we'd build with it. And we'd do it in memory of Hollywood. They've built their share of sewers, why not build one out here in Iowa?" ■

Phil is a popular author and speaker. Visit him online at www.philcallaway.com

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Christ the King

Jesus' authority comes from the cross, not from some castle. BY LAURENCE DEWOLFE

Gospel for Nov. 25, 2007: Luke 23:33-43

Whether we refer to this day traditionally, "Christ the King" or, expansively, "The Reign of Christ," we have to be careful. Any word we choose to describe Jesus or define his purpose is full of meaning drawn from our knowledge of the word and our experience with it. We may insist Jesus is a king like no other, and his reign is unlike any rule known on earth. We're still using other kings and other dominions as standards of comparison.

Jesus reserves the right to reveal who he is. If we respond to that revelation in ways we understand, we should allow him to define our words

Throughout the Gospels, we see Jesus resisting any attempt to define himself. He rarely accepted a name or a title. He silenced anyone who figured out his full name. In Luke's account of his dialogue with Pilate, Jesus won't say yes or no to the name "Son of God." He says, "You say that I am." (22:70) He called himself, "Son of Man," the human one, recalling a surprising revelation in a prophetic vision.

Jesus reserves the right to reveal who he is. If we respond to that revelation in ways we understand, we should allow him to define our words. If he lets us call him King and declare his reign, then we have to let his definitions become the standard by which we measure all rule and authority on earth.

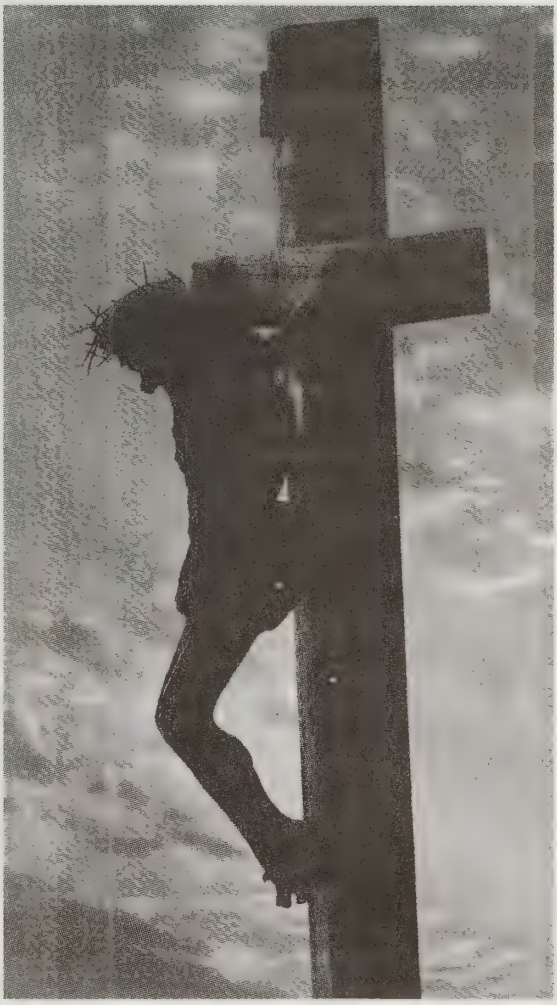
We tend to romanticize monarchs. We think of the Queen within the frame of the pomp and circumstance that still surround constitutional monarchy. We still image kings and queens through the eyes of childhood, constructing fairy-tale castles. When Jesus says, "My kingdom is not of this world," we imagine heaven as a safe, walled kingdom further away than memory and no more real.

The Lectionary gives us just a taste of the Passion narrative from Luke. We can't hear one episode of the story without the echoes of the rest of the story. The crux of our reading is the ironic inscription, "This is the King of the Jews." We read that sign just after we hear Jesus mocked in his apparent failure to act like a king. Jesus doesn't respond when they call him Messiah or King, or when they put that sign bearing the charge against him over his head.

What does he do? He acts with authority while the agents of imperial rule nail him to a cross. He invokes God's forgiveness on his executioners and all who are complicit in the injustice he so confidently accepts. After he's mocked with spoken and written words, he pardons a justly convicted criminal and grants entrance into paradise, his royal estate. His grace and favour flow, but not to anyone we would say deserves them. As he dies, the sun can't shine. God's dwelling on earth can't stand. (vv.44, 45) No one can take his life away from him. When he dies he surrenders himself to God. (v.46)

This is the One who rules from the cross. We rush to raise him, send him to heaven, and enthrone him there in romance and wishful thinking. We'll allow him "spiritual" authority over us, but we won't agree on what that means or how it works. For this one day, at least, let's leave him on the cross. We'll see him reigning, though not in any way we'll understand at first. Let him define words like "Christ," "King," and "reign"—words we use so carelessly.

Then let's look at the people who have authority over us. Look at the ways we use the power our privileged position in this world gives us. Do they bear comparing with the One who rules from the cross? ■



PHOTOGRAPH: ISTOCKPHOTO

Rev. Laurence DeWolfe is minister at St. David's, Halifax.



Catamount Choices

We fulfill our mandate to Jesus by making decisions. BY DAVID WEBBER

November is deer hunting season. When you live a rural lifestyle, in my neck of the woods at least, you grow most of your vegetables in a garden, gather a lot of your fruit in the bush, collect a good portion of your fish from a stream or lake and hunt for most of your meat and fowl in the woods. Anything less and you are missing out on what a rural lifestyle in the Cariboo-Chilcotin has to offer; you might just as well be living in the city. Each hunting and gathering endeavour has a month assigned to it. November is deer hunting.

The other day I got out of bed in the dark and checked the calendar to find out what I was supposed to be doing. It was the big buck deer season. Sunrise found me sitting under a tree at one of my favorite deer trails with a thermos of hot coffee, a rifle and an image in my mind of a huge buck (male deer). I was intently focused on a spot where the deer trail went through a cut-line. An hour later, no venison had presented itself so I decided to get technical and try a calling sequence. This amounts to skillfully blowing through a little plastic gizmo that looks like a mouthpiece from an oboe and making deer noises, in this case the sound of a lovesick doe (a female deer). The idea is to attract a lovesick buck; at least that's the theory. Like most things technical, when it comes to nature it doesn't usually work but at least it's something to do while you're waiting.

An hour of intermittently making deer noises passed and still no venison showed up. That's odd, I thought. I always see at least a doe or two at this spot. I was in the midst of contemplating this unusual situation, as well as the rather queer feeling I had been experiencing for about a half hour, when the reason for both wandered out on the deer trail intersection. There before me, less than 50 metres away, was the largest cougar I had ever seen. The cat stalked slowly out into full view, turned his head and looked right at me. No fooling, I could see the colour of his eyes. He looked like he could see clear though me, and if he did, he would have seen the hair on the back of my neck standing straight up. After staring at me for what seemed like hours (actually probably less than a minute) the huge catamount flicked his tail, turned his head and stalked on down the deer trail.

Seeing the big cat seriously unnerved me but when I began to unpack the experience immediately after the cougar had left, I nearly had my first coronary. My careless deer calling had attracted the huge cougar. I figure he showed up on the scene about the same time my queer feeling did, no doubt stalking up behind me for a good look at a possible meal. I don't know how close he got, but the bush is rather thick behind where I was sitting so I'm guessing about 25 feet. That would have given him a good look. For at least a half hour he eyed me up from behind my back making several deliberate choices. I am not sure what all those deliberate choices were but one was that I was not a deer, therefore not worthy of a deer attack.

Choice affects almost every aspect of my life. And many of those choices I make ripple out to have an effect far beyond me

Another was that I was a rather stupid oblivious human, a suitable option for prey for any hunting cougar. Humans have fallen victim to aggressive and hunting cougars before. This one chose not to elect his option. Instead, and I am not sure why, he chose to back off a bit and walk right out in front of me and scare me half to death. And then he made another choice, flicked his tail and cat-walked down the trail chuckling to himself.

Most cats are very deliberate with choice. Five minutes watching the family cat in the back yard gives you an idea of what I mean. Cougars or catamounts take this to an extreme. Choice for them is something very deliberate, intentional and calculated. In that, they take full advantage of choice. Would that I could do the same.

When it comes to choice, like many of my species, I tend to approach it like it is some kind of crapshoot. I don't deliberate or calculate very much. A lot of the times I don't choose at all, satisfied with just letting things happen and then muttering, "I guess it was meant to be," when what happens turns out badly. That's really a weird and skewed view of the sovereignty of God. At other times I make choices like I can remake them over and over again to my heart's content, not really spending much time on the gravity of what I am choosing. That's really a queer way to approach reoccurring sin in my life. At other times I make choices and try to feign that I am a victim when things turn out badly. That's a great responsibility cop-out when it comes to health choices. And so it goes.

The freedom of choice is one of the greatest gifts of grace God gives each one of us. Choice, especially in the affluent part of the world I get to live in, affects almost every aspect of my life. And many of the choices I make ripple out to have an effect far beyond me. If I am going to treat this great God-given gift in the spiritual and grateful and responsible way it deserves, it seems to me I need to make a shift towards making catamount choices ... intentional, deliberate, premeditated, calculated choices.

Often when Presbyterians think about choice it quickly becomes theological and theoretical. We tend to go back to the first couple of chapters of Genesis and begin to think in terms of stuff like "free will," "original sin," "predestination" and "sovereignty of God." Uuuugh! I think this misses the point. Choice is a deeply spiritual and practical thing, especially for the Christian. Exercising choice is the option I have for imaging God in society and creation. I can choose to care in a costly way, to love unconditionally, to live simply, to pray continuously, to seek the mind of Christ, to do the will of God. Choice is how I fulfill my mandate to follow Jesus. Choice is the platform from which all my ministry springs. Choice is the arena of practical Christian ethics. It behooves me then to make my choices, catamount choices. ■

Rev. David Webber is a contributing editor to the Record. *He is a minister of the Cariboo, B.C. house church ministry. His most recent book is* Like a Winter's Aspen: Embracing the Creator's Fire.



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Part 2

Table Manners

O taste and see that the Lord is Good! BY KEN CRAIGIE

On Friday night the community gathered in the cramped choir of the Abby Church at Iona. The order of service seemed similar to ours: familiar prayers and hymns were included; after the sermon, the feast. Following a communion hymn, a few members got up and brought to the table the ewer, the loaf and two chalices. The celebrant began with familiar words, "O taste and see that the Lord is good." After the Great Eucharistic Prayer, he turned, breaking the loaf and having eaten of it, passed halves in two directions. Each person in turn passed each piece on to the next, and it continued until all were fed. After eating, he raised the ewer with the familiar words, then poured into each of the two large chalices. No one moved from his or her place. Everyone served each other.

Few of us had experienced communion in this way but for centuries the church in many reformed parts of the world did this regularly.

At St. Giles' High Kirk, Edinburgh, the service proceeded as in the order we are accustomed. The prayers and hymns were familiar in type and style yet some of the words were fresh—some dosed with a Celtic burr like my grandfather's.

Then came the communion hymn and in marched four people, one with the offering plates stacked on a silver tray, one with a large ewer, one with two chalices, and last with a tray with loaves of bread. Each one presented their offerings to the minister who placed them on the Holy Table. After the Great Eucharistic prayer with parts sung by the whole of the congregation, the minister called to the congregation, which then gathered in a circle around the Holy Table. The minister took one of the loaves and broke it and ate from it and then passed half to one side of the circle and the other half-loaf to a starting person opposite. After each had received from the minister they in turn offered it to the person to their right and the loaves passed person to person. When the bread had started to move along, the minister returned to the table and poured into each of the two chalices and after supping from one himself, offered each in turn to the two starting members of the circle gathered; and then each in turn served their neighbour to the right. When each element had completed the half circle, the minister gathered the bread and the chalices and returned them to the table. Then he invoked the Peace—each participant shared the peace and returned to their place in the church—and then a second circle gathered, and a third and a fourth. During each of the successive distributions, the choir and congregation sang, seated, offering praise to the God of Grace who gives us grace to live.

Here again this Canadian experienced communion in a new way in the old world for the second time. The St. Giles' service served about 600-700 people and was not much longer than 75 minutes—not bad for serving that many, and so smoothly.

How do you serve one another? Is it pompous or seems so? Is it efficient in time and ease? In preparation? And cleanup? If frequency of communion is increased at your church, keeping the manner of celebrating it meaningfully is a challenge; this may require new ways that keep the essentials and dismiss the show. Liturgy is the work of the people; good liturgy is simple, inclusive, and meaningful to all—after all, God is the host, not the minister or the elders! ■

Ken Craigie is an elder at Rosedale, Toronto.

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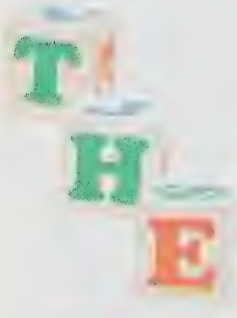


TIPS: Cross off each syllable as you use it because each is used only once and none will be left over. The number (shown in brackets after the dashes) lets you know how many syllables you need for each word and the number of dashes shows you how many letters are in each word.

Syllables are like building blocks. Put them together and you create words. Use the syllables, found in the list inside the box, to fill in each missing word below. These hymn titles express our Christian faith.

LIST OF SYLLABLES

a	Beth	bless	bod	com	der	el
Em	en	faith	faith	fol	ful	ful
Gal	hem	herd	i	ing	ing	ings
Je	joice	le	lee	low	man	mand
maz	ment	ness	ness	re	ris	row
shep	shin	spar	sus	u	wil	y





1. The Lord's my __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ (2)
2. Lord, the light of your love is __ __ __ __ __ __ __ (2)
3. Oh come, all ye __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ (2)
4. When Jesus the healer passed through __ __ __ __ __ __ __ (3)
5. Praise God from whom all __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ (2) flow
6. __ __ __ __ __ __ __ (2), the Lord is King
7. There's a voice in the __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ (3) crying
8. Great is thy __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ (3)
9. __ __ __ __ __ (2) bids us shine
10. A new __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ (3) I give unto you
11. Jesus Christ is __ __ __ __ __ (2) today
12. Oh come, oh come, __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ (4)
13. God of the __ __ __ __ __ __ __ (2), God of the whale
14. In __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ (3) a newborn boy
15. Will you come and __ __ __ __ __ __ (2) me
16. __ __ __ __ __ __ __ (3) grace
17. One bread, one __ __ __ __ (2)





Ministry Opportunities and Interim Moderators

Synod of the Atlantic Provinces

Bass River, N.B., Bass River Pastoral Charge; Rev. Kent Burdett, 101 Dutch Point Rd., Hampton, NB E5N 5Z2; 506-832-4985; kburdett@nbnet.nb.ca.

Halifax, N.S.; Knox Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. D. Laurence Mawhinney, PO Box 1972, Lunenburg, NS B0J 2C0; 902-634-4410 (office); 902-634-9212 (home); dlmawhinney@eastlink.ca.

Sunny Corner Pastoral Charge, N.B., St. Stephen's, Sunny Corner, St. Paul's, Warwick; Rev. H. Martyn Van Essen, 7 Hierlihy Rd., Tabusintac, NB E9H 1Y5; 506-779-1812; hmvanessen@hotmail.com.

Synod of Quebec and Eastern Ontario

Gatineau (Aylmer), Que., St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church; Rev. Gregory Davidson, c/o St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 82 Kent St., Ottawa, ON K1P 5N9; 613-232-9042; gd@standrewsottawa.ca.

Gloucester (Ottawa), Ont., Gloucester Presbyterian Church; Half-time minister; Interim Moderator Dr. Daniel MacKinnon, 1220 Old Tenth Line Rd., Orleans, ON K1E 3W7; 613-824-9260; pastordan@graceorleans.ca.

Lachute, Que., Margaret Rodger Memorial Presbyterian Church; Rev. Dr. Bill Klempa, 155 Lake Louisa Rd. N., Wentworth, QC J8H 0C5; 450-533-5321; wklemp@po-box.mcgill.ca.

Morrisburg, Ont., Knox; Dunbar, Ont., Dunbar; Rev. P. E. M. Chambers, PO Box 1513, Kemptville, ON K0G 1J0; 613-258-6654; perlcham@sympatico.ca.

Pincourt, Que., Ile Perrot; Mark Farrell, Convener, Search Committee, 242 Fifth Ave., Pincourt, QC J7V 5L3; 514-453-4796; markim@ca.inter.net.

Synod of Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda

Englehart, St. Paul's; Tomstown, Ont., Tomstown; St. Paul's and Tomstown Pastoral Charge, approximately 10 km from Tomstown; Full-time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Janice Hamalainen, PO Box 908, New Liskeard, ON P0J 1P0; 705-647-8401; jhamalainen@parolink.net.

Madoc, Ont., St. Peter's Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator, c/o St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 110 Mill St., PO Box 118, Stirling, ON K0K 3E0; 613-395-5006; katherinejonah@hotmail.com.

Mississauga, Ont., Dixie Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Reid Chudley, PO Box 16, Hillsburgh, ON N0B 1Z0; 519-855-6216; r.chudley@bellnet.ca.

Mississauga, Ont., St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Peter Barrow, 24 Stavebank Rd. N., Mississauga, ON L5G 2T5; 905-278-8907; standrewspc@bellnet.ca.

Kitchener, Ont., St. Andrew's; Full-Time Minister of Pastoral Care; Interim Moderator Rev. Don McCallum, 55 Devere Dr., Guelph, ON N1G 2T3; 519-866-9400; Don@kortrightchurch.org.

Richmond Hill, Ont., Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Daniel Scott, 39 Saint Ave., Bradford, ON L3Z 3E6; 905-775-7274; ddscott@rogers.com.

Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., Westminster Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Deon Slabbert, 38 Country Club Place, Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6A 5Z9; 705-945-7885; revdeons@shaw.ca.

Scarborough, Ont., Westminster Presbyterian Church, Interim Moderator Rev. Ann Blane, 1300 Danforth Rd., Scarborough, ON M1J 1E8; 416-267-7897.

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Toronto, Ont., Guildwood Community; Rev. J. P. Ian Morrison, 17 Earswick Dr., Scarborough, ON M1E 1C7; 416-265-0135; Ian.morrison@sympatico.ca.

West Toronto Presbytery, York Memorial; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Lance Odland, 11 Cross St., Toronto, ON M9N 2B8; 416-241-9533; lance@westonpresbyterianchurch.com.

Synod of Southwestern Ontario

Ancaster, St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Rev. Anne Yee-Hibbs, c/o Erskine Presbyterian Church, 19 Pearl St. N., Hamilton, ON L8R 2Y6; synodaec@on.aibn.com.

Burlington, Knox; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Philip Wilson, c/o Trinity Presbyterian Church, 720 Ninth Ave., Hamilton, ON L8T 2A3; 905-385-5984; revpmw@auracom.com.

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Applications should be submitted to:
The General Secretary, Life and Mission Agency
50 Wynford Dr., Toronto, ON, M3C 1J7
Email: rfee@presbyterian.ca

117 Argyle St. N., Caledonia, ON N3W 1B8; 905-765-4524; jeff.chalmers@ontario.ca.

Chatsworth, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church; Dornoch, Latona Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Michelle Butterfield-Kocis, c/o Westminister Presbyterian Church, PO Box 359, Paisley, ON N0G 2N0; 519-353-6020; Westminster.stpaul@bmts.com.

Fonthill, Kirk-on-the-Hill; Rev. Dr. Jack Neil, c/o First Presbyterian Church, 176 Elm St., Port Colborne, ON L3K 4N6; 905-834-4288.

Forest, St. James; Interim Moderator Rev. Daniel Roushorne, c/o St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, PO Box 1381, Corunna, ON N0N 1G0; 519-862-3641; sapcorunna@xcelco.on.ca.

Hamilton, MacNab St.; Rev. George Robertson, 80 Mill St. N., PO Box 221, Waterdown, ON L0R 2H0; 905-689-8115; rev.george@bellnet.ca.

Hamilton, New Westminster; Half-Time; Rev. R. Docherty, c/o St. John's Presbyterian Church, 10 Mountain St., Grimsby, ON L3M 3J6; 905-945-5352. admin@stjohnsgrimsby.com

Hamilton, St. Columba; Dr. Clyde Ervine, 165 Charlton Ave. W., Hamilton, ON L8P 2C8; 905-522-9098; cervine.central@on.aibn.com.

Kirkwall Presbyterian Church; Full-time minister; Interim Moderator, Rev. Bob Dawson, 2138 Brant St., Burlington, ON L7P 3W5; 905-335-2640; minister@branthills.ca.

London, St. Lawrence; Half-time; Interim Moderator Rev. Lynn Nichol, 783 Victoria St., London, ON N5Y 4C9; 519-434-2476; briarhill33@yahoo.ca.

Mitchell, Knox Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Catherine Calkin, 3403 Perth Rd. 130, R.R. 2, St. Pauls, ON N0K 1V0; 519-393-6395; calkin@quadro.net.

Molesworth, St. Andrew's; Part-time position; John Zondag, 220 Livingstone Ave. N., Listowel, ON N4W 1P9; 519-291-4690; jzondag@wightman.ca.

Port Dover, Knox and Hagersville, St. Andrew's (two-point charge); Interim Moderator Rev. Kathy Morden, Knox Presbyterian Church, 2058 Main St. N., Jarvis, ON N0A 1J0; 519-587-2565; knoxchal@bellnet.ca.

Sarnia, Paterson Memorial; Vacancy begins April 1, 2008; Rev. Ena Van Zoren, PO Box 421, Wyoming, ON N0N 1T0; 519-845-1931; enavanz@gmail.com.

Simcoe, St. Paul's; Rev. Dr. Stan Cox, Interim Moderator c/o St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, 85 Lot St., Simcoe, ON N3Y 1S4; 519-426-1845; sppc@kwic.com; www.stpaulssimcoe.com.

Stoney Creek, Heritage Green; Half-time position; Interim Moderator Rev. Bob Geddes, c/o The South Gate Presbyterian Church, 120 Claredon Ave., Hamilton, ON L9A 3A5; 905-385-7444; bobgeddes@mountaincable.net.

Thornbury, St. Paul's; Rev. Alice Wilson, PO Box 20004, Hanover, ON N4N 3T1; standrews@wightman.ca.

Wallaceburg, Knox Presbyterian; Interim Moderator Rev. Mike Maroney, c/o First Presbyterian Church, 60 Fifth St., Chatham, ON N7M 4V7; 519-352-2313; maroney@firstchatham.org.

Woodstock, Knox; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Lonnie Atkinson, c/o St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, 56 Thames St. S., Ingersoll, ON N5C 2S9; 519-485-3390; stpauls@execulink.com.

Synod of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario

Selkirk, Man., Knox Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Robert Murray, PO Box 222, Pinawa, MB R0E 1L0; 204-753-8439; pcf@granite.mb.ca.

Synod of Saskatchewan

Saskatoon, Circle West; Parkview; Rev. Amanda Currie, 436 Spadina Cres. E, Saskatoon, SK S7K 3G6; 306-242-0525; standrews@sasktel.net.

Weyburn, Knox; Interim Moderator Rev. Tae-Wook (Jonathan) Kwon; PO Box 7, Grenfell, SK S0G 2B0; 306-697-2612; joyktw@hotmail.com.

Synod of Alberta and the Northwest

Chauvin, Alta., Westminster and Wainwright, Alta., St. Andrew's Pastoral Charge; Rev. Stephen Haughland, PO Box 663, Killam, AB T0B 2L0; 780-385-2147; tepkje@telus.net.

Edmonton, Alta., Strathcona Presbyterian Church; www.spchurch.ca; Interim Moderator Rev. Annabelle Wallace, 423-14259 50th St. NW, Edmonton, AB T5A 5J2; 780-633-0170; annabellew@shaw.ca.

Fort McMurray, Alta., Faith Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Lloyd Fourney, 18512 92nd Ave., Edmonton, AB T5T 1P4; 780-481-1614; fourney@hotmail.com.

Medicine Hat, Alta., St. John's Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Diane V. Beach, 212 Perry Cres. NE, Medicine Hat, AB T1C 1X3; home 403-526-3512, office 403-526-4542; dianebeach@shaw.ca.

Synod of British Columbia

Armstrong, St. Andrew's; effective July 1, 2007; Rev. Doug Swanson, 1981 9th Ave. NE, Salmon Arm, BC V1E 1M1; 250-832-7282; standrews@jetstream.net.

Nanaimo, St. Andrew's; Dr. John F. Allan, 4235 Departure Bay Rd., Nanaimo, BC V9T 1C9; jfallan@shaw.ca.

Slocan Valley, St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Rev. Gavin Robertson, c/o First Presbyterian Church, 1139 Pine Ave., Trail, BC V1R 4R2; 250-364-0335; firstpc@telus.net.

Vancouver, Chinese Presbyterian Church, Associate Minister (English Ministry); Interim Moderator, Rev. Diane Tait-Katerberg, c/o Chinese Presbyterian Church, 6137 Cambie St., Vancouver, BC V5Z 3B2; katerberg@dccnet.com.

Victoria, Chinese (bilingual, English/Cantonese); Rev. H. McNabb, 760 Latoria Rd., Victoria, BC V9C 3A4; hamcnabb@shaw.ca

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Obituaries

DOHERTY, Joseph Raeburne, better known as Bernie to all at Trinity, Campbell River, B.C., was born on July 30,

1934, and joined his beloved Lolita on Aug. 8, 2007.

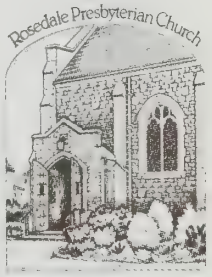
Bernie served in our congregation as a rep elder and an elder for many years. Bernie always had a smile even when the going was tough. He said his faith, family and friends carried him through. He will be missed.

LOOM, George Eric, 1912-2007, beloved father of Jennifer and cherished grandfather of Johanna and Maxwell, died peacefully on Aug. 31, 2007, in Alexandria, Ont., at age 95. George was born in England and emigrated to Canada in 1949. From 1956 to retirement in 1977, he worked as office services manager for Chubb Insurance. He served as a retired volunteer with The Presbyterian Church in Canada from 1983 to 2000, assigned to The Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) in Kenya, working as administrator and maintenance officer at Kkuyu Hospital and at Tumutumu Hospital. During this period, George guided a Kenyan into the role of administrator while continuing to work as the maintenance officer. George returned to Canada in 2000 and continued to support the work of Tumutumu Hospital.

George made a significant contribution to both hospitals by putting them on a sound financial footing, seeing to repairs and upkeep and generally improving staff morale. He was respected throughout the church and cherished the Kenyan people in their diversity, rich heritage and culture. We give thanks to God for the dedicated ministry of George Loom to the people and the church in Kenya. The Presbyterian Church in Canada joins the family in celebrating the exemplary and selfless life of George Loom. ■



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December 2, 2007 will be our **Anniversary Communion Service** with visiting Moderator, **REV. DR. HANS KOUWENBERG**, 10:30 a.m. (As a tribute to our inaugural year of 1907, a bit of Edwardian Dress is encouraged.)

We are organizing an **Alumni Choir Event** for the Fall of 2008. If you sang at RPC, please contact Alexandra Johnston (ajohnsto@chass.utoronto.ca)

Future Events: Please visit our website for regular updates at www.rpcc.ca or contact us at office@rpcc.ca . Or, for that personal touch, call our Minister, Bill MacLellan at 416-921-1931; or you can e-mail him at minister@rpcc.ca

Evangelism and Mission

We need to return to our roots, serving our Lord and Saviour. BY REV. DR. J. H. HANS KOUWENBERG



My first trip after assembly was to Winnipeg to celebrate the anniversary of a covenant our church and other Canadian churches made with aboriginal people—promising to walk together in new paths of healing and reconciliation—as well as to visit some of the congregations in the presbytery. I took and read Peter Bush's recent book, *Western Challenge: The Presbyterian Church in Canada's Mission on the Prairies and North, 1885-1925*. After all, Winnipeg was once the railhead and supply capital of the west, and the advance of the gospel from that city by Presbyterians, who were passionately committed to reaching those who had settled in the west and the north, was nothing short of phenomenal. These pioneering missionaries, under the supervision of the legendary James Robertson, were keen for the Lord and they were innovative. They established new churches; they touched the lives of aboriginal people and new settlement communities alike. Thus, in spite of numerous bureaucratic holdups, the gospel fell into fertile ground and produced abundantly rich harvests.

It was an invigorating time to be a leader and a member in the Presbyterian family of the Christian church. But, despite that faithful witness, it now seems our church has dwindled substantially, and evangelism and mission seem to have dried up on the hard soil of increasing secularism, materialism, ever-growing centralism and shifting, changing church convictions and priorities.

One of the marks of a healthy church —locally, regionally and nationally—is found in needs-oriented evangelism. This kind of evangelism connects to a real need, it shows real concern, and, it seeks to speak Jesus Christ into that situation. When we had skateboarders on the roof of our church, we started a skateboard ministry. When we found street people on our doorstep we started a downtown street ministry. There is an attempt to incarnate the gospel; and, there is a desire to reach out and touch the lives of others in such a way that they, too, may come to know and serve our Lord and Saviour.

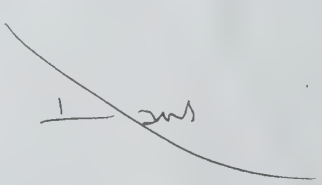
While I am sure many of our local churches are engaged in this ministry, I wonder if we have any regional or national vision for evangelism? I've attended many assemblies and read the reports. I've been struck by how many fine things The Presbyterian Church in Canada has had to say about social justice on the local, regional, national and international levels. The stories have been inspiring. But the reports on evangelism and new missionary strategies have been less and less evident (and have been paid less and less attention in as rapid a pace as the awful decline in the membership of our church).

Why is this so? Many of us were raised as "evangelicals" – believing the basic eternal truths of the Christian faith and desirous of sharing them with others, for example, in organizations such as Inter Varsity Christian Fellowship. But somehow concern for the "lost" seems to have been drained out of our lives and thoughts. For some, it has even become embarrassing to be an overt Christian.

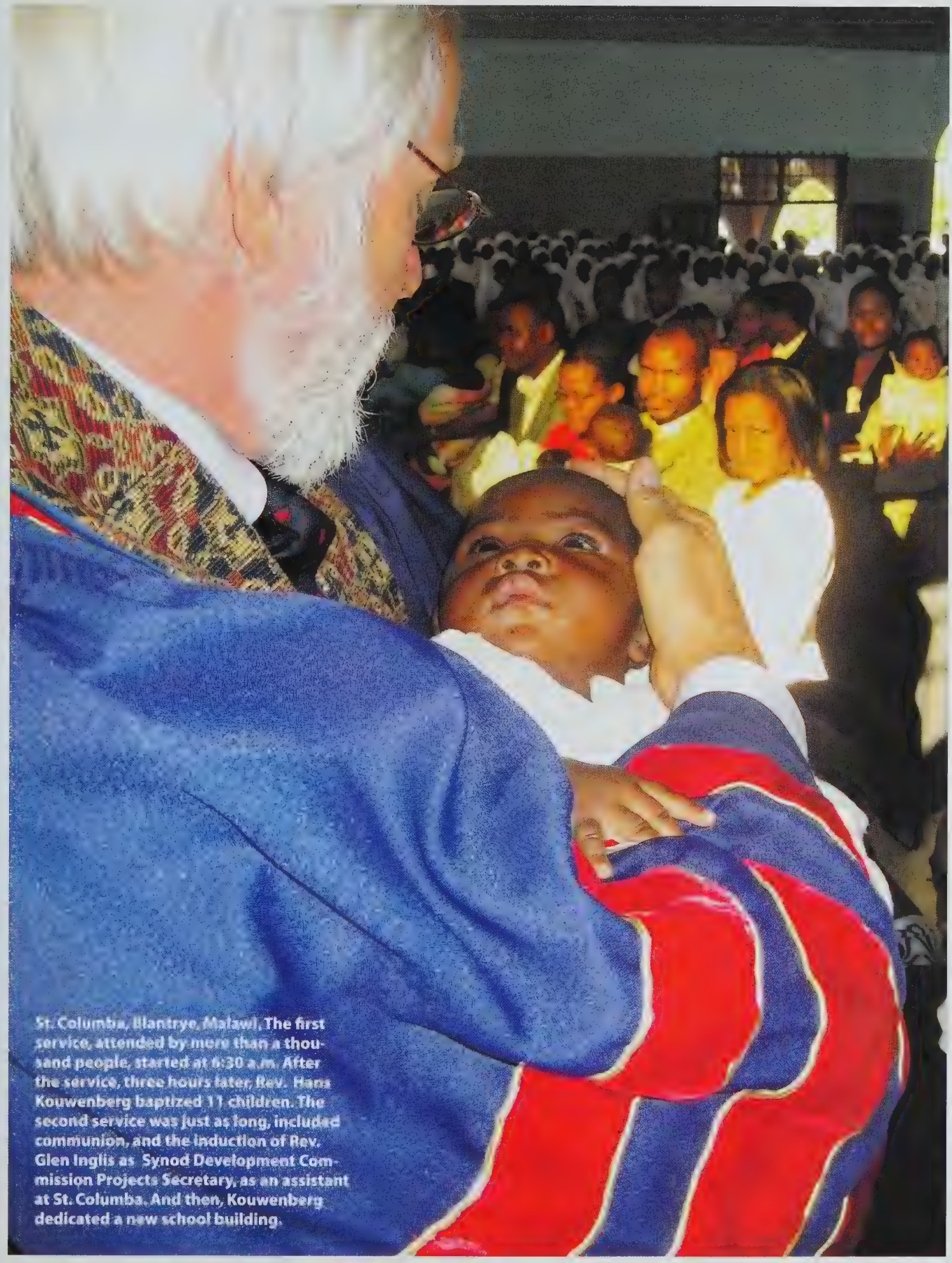
I am aware of the theological and socio-political reasons. There are aspects of the gospel that need to be nuanced. There are ambiguities in our own lives that need to be considered. We live in a multi-faith world, right in our own neighbourhood. And, the truth is we are, sometimes, inappropriately aggressive in taking the gospel to others. But have we lost faith in believing Jesus Christ is the answer to our own and the world's questions? Have we lost our vision and nerve to take his gospel to others?

Of course, there are many stories that could be told of those who are indeed sharing the gospel—"gossiping the gospel"—but these stories have not been told often enough. Nor does there seem to be much appetite for any regional or national evangelistic strategies, and, frankly, "colouring outside of the lines" of our usual way of doing things is difficult.

True, a few are trying to take some of the latest "seeker-sensitive" and "emerging church" models seriously, adapting them to Canadian and Presbyterian contexts, and seeking to minister to younger generations and contemporary culture; but, by and large, most of our churches seem to lumber half-heartedly, haltingly, along. Will there be a Presbyterian church in your community tomorrow? Only if there is a greater commitment to needs-oriented evangelism. ■



Hans Kouwenberg



St. Columba, Blantrye, Malawi. The first service, attended by more than a thousand people, started at 6:30 a.m. After the service, three hours later, Rev. Hans Kouwenberg baptized 11 children. The second service was just as long, included communion, and the induction of Rev. Glen Inglis as Synod Development Commission Projects Secretary, as an assistant at St. Columba. And then, Kouwenberg dedicated a new school building.

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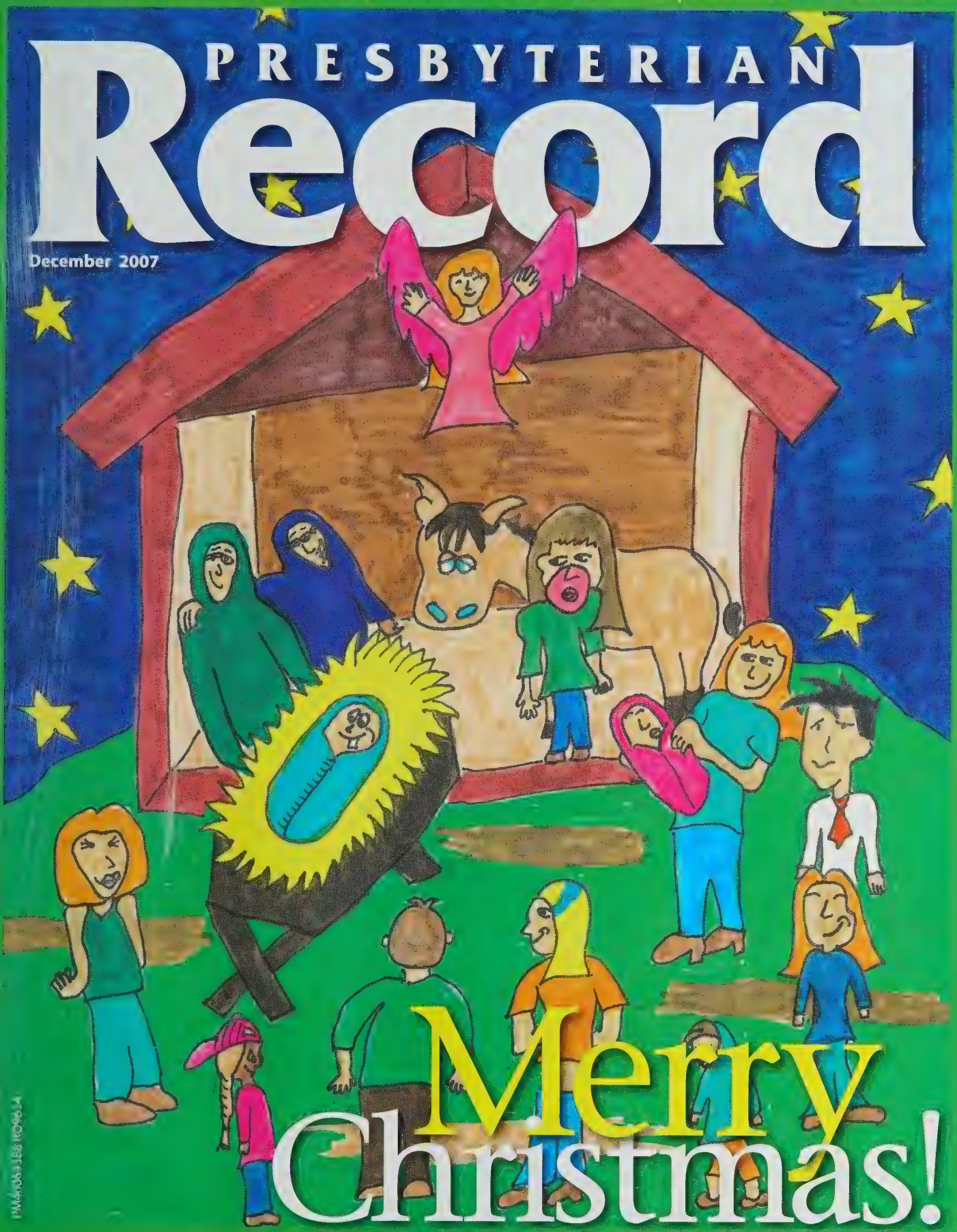
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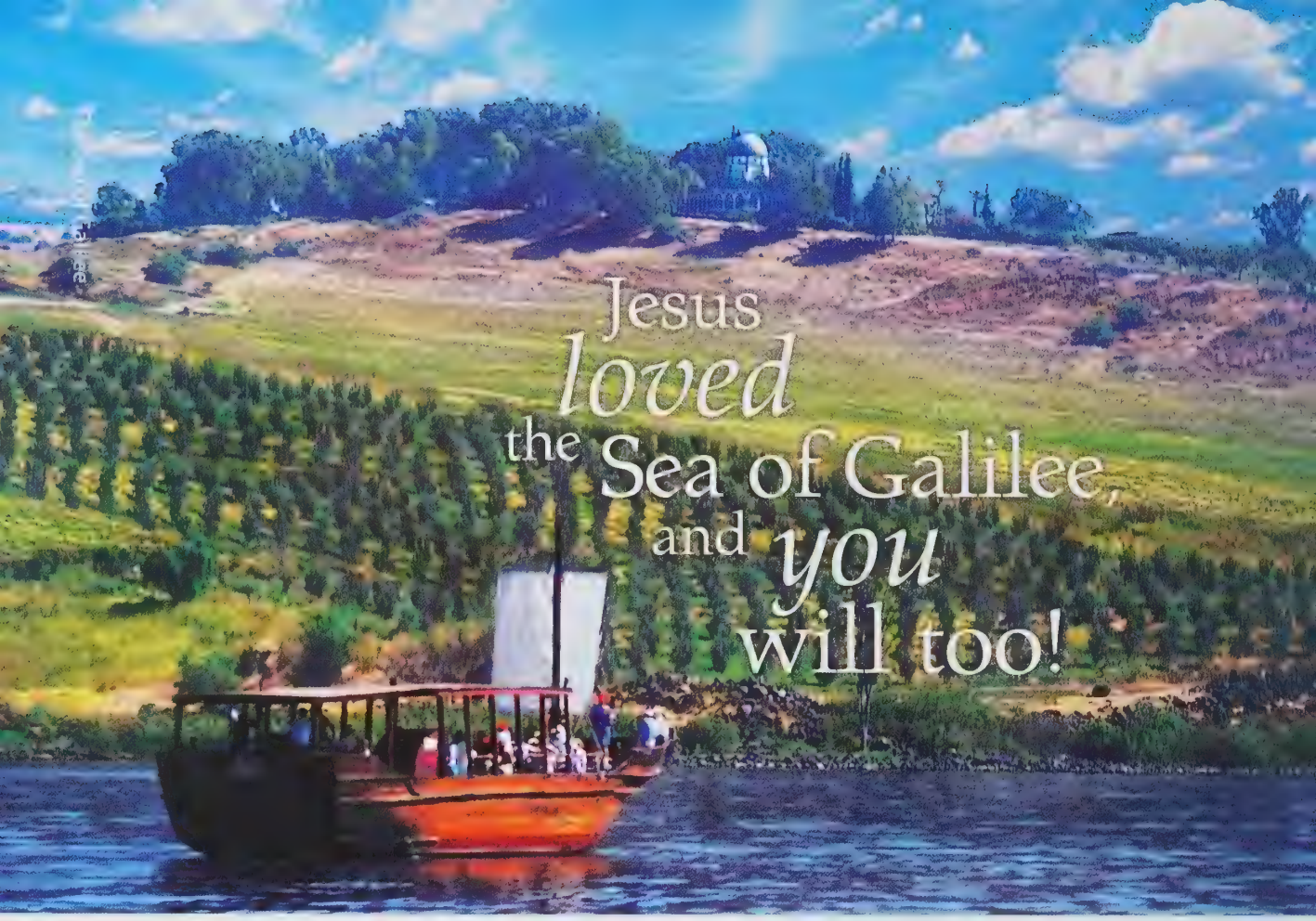
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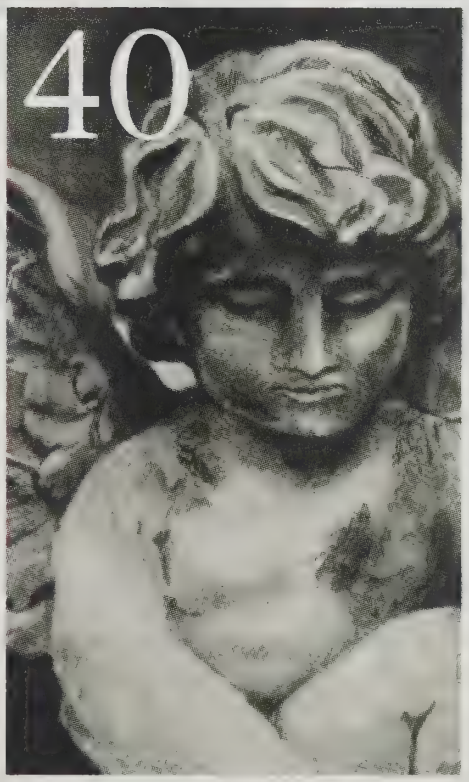


Advent Calendar

Special Pull Out! A season for mission



On the Cover:
For the second year, our Christmas cover by Bethany Morton, Glencoe, Ont.



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MESSY BUSINESS

God through Jesus chose to be incarnated in a fractious world.

BY DAVID HARRIS



Christmas is the time when we celebrate the Prince of Peace. But few people in this world live in real peace. What are we to do about it?

Canada has a considerable military force in Afghanistan trying to help bring about some peace and stability in that country. Yet, according to the polls, most Canadians oppose the Afghan mission.

Blame successive federal governments for failing to explain what Canada is doing. As a result, many of us think we simply bowed to pressure from the United States. Translated, that means we think we are helping the Bush administration not the Afghan people.

But this is a deflection from the central question of whether we ought to be in Afghanistan and whether we are accomplishing any good there. The evidence suggests we are helping and is clearer that it would be far worse if we weren't there.

Here's the thing: Jesus wasn't born into a nice upper middle-class family in a leafy suburb of Rome. He was born in the fractious, foreign-occupied Middle East. Today he might well have been born in Darfur. He certainly wouldn't be packing his bags to take the trans-Canada travel package, safe and stunning though it may be.

It is too easy to come up with lame excuses why Canadians should not enter into this or that fray when the bottom line is that in order to help achieve some semblance of peace and stability, we who live in a peaceful prosperous country have to be willing to sacrifice in order to help others.

Recall Rwanda. When Lt.-Gen. Romeo Dallaire pleaded for more military support for his UN mission to prevent civil war, he was shamefully ignored, as we see clearly now.

And what did the world do for Darfur? Nothing. We looked on yet again as a government urged one faction to terrorize and massacre innocent civilians in their own country.

No, Canada did not, does not, have the resources to intervene directly everywhere, but we have a voice at the international table to call other countries to account and to rally support for those who have no voice, no place at the table.

Besides our military, our diplomats in Foreign Affairs are widely respected internationally for their low-key but important work in many troubled regions of the world. Yet the current government is hampering their work by imposing ideologically driven political restraints.

This is particularly the case in the Middle East where Canada has worked quietly to help prepare Palestinians to govern themselves. Political interference is now undermining their work towards establishing regional peace.

Canadians used to be proud of our country's international peacekeeper role. But situations change and the ground rules change. We are not powerful enough to thwart these, but that does not mean we can hide our heads in the snow and abandon our international responsibilities.

Recent discussions about our national identity often draw attention to our Judeo-Christian heritage. Surely trying to create possibilities for peace is chief among those virtues.

The world is messy: it always has been. Yet God chose not only to be incarnated into that messiness but to confront it directly, ultimately being killed by a ruthless imperial power at the instigation of a local faction.

Canadians ought to properly debate (which we haven't) where and how we will try to deploy our resources to help those who are unable to help themselves at any given time. Do we believe women and children should be educated in Afghanistan? Then we must help create that possibility.

Andrew Faiz's article on Afghanistan in our October issue outlined some of the church-sponsored aid work there that Presbyterians rightly value. We should equally value then those who try to make it possible for that work to be done safely.

The season of peace calls us to reflect on how we can make this a better world for all its inhabitants. Your prayers and support for the church's mission and development work are crucial. So are your prayers for our armed forces and their families.

Peace is a messy business in this world. God knows it.

The *Record* staff and I wish you many blessings for a peaceful and joyous Christmas and a holy new year.

David Harris

Letters

letters@presbyterianrecord.ca



Moderator the tops

Re Letters, October

I do believe that the moderator of each General Assembly should be "The Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Canada" for the following year. Furthermore, this should be our only moderator. Our denomination dilutes its meaning through overuse. For example, each local church vacancy is overseen by an interim moderator.

Canada is headed by a prime minister; each province a premier; and each city a mayor. We should use moderator only for the top position and separate vocabulary for other leadership roles.

BARRY R. BETZNER, HAMILTON, ONT.

In the 60s the moderator was elected from nominations put forward on the floor of General Assembly. Then it seemed good to the spirit and others that the "past" Moderator of General Assembly serve the Church by deputation visits (subject to exigencies).

Later nominations for the moderator of assembly were to be submitted by presbyteries. Those names which received two or more nominations were then sent to presbyteries for a vote by lay and cleric members of the church.

The nominee to receive the largest number of votes became the official nominee for moderator. In order to prevent officialdom from being a curia, the assembly held the right to nominate others from the floor. Thus, the moderator elected by the assembly moderated the sessions of that assembly.

At the close of the assembly, by moderatorial benediction, the moderator's duties ended except to call the next assembly and oversee election of its moderator.

I believe it has been the beneficial deputation work, carried out by the moderator of the last assembly for the national church offices, that has made the moderator look like the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. (Archbishop, as others see us.)

I was nominated by both the Presbytery of Montreal and the Presbytery of Quebec for Moderator of the 107th General Assembly, while I was a serving chaplain. My General phoned me at home one evening saying, "Bob, you can't be moderator while serving in the military. If you are elected you would be your own boss!" I said, "You have traveled a long way from your Presbyterian roots if you believe any moderator is boss over any court or person!"

It would be clearer if moderator-elect, then moderator, then Past Moderator of the General Assembly were used.

BOB MACLEAN, VIA EMAIL

Even more sides

In no way do I wish to detract from Rev. Gordon Williams' accomplishments or ministry, but he was not the first Native minister in the Presbyterian Church.

Rev. Solomon Tunkasuiciye, a Dakota, served a congregation on the Birdtail Reserve (just south of Birtle) from 1877 to 1887. Through his ministry Peter Hunter, Jason Ben and John Thunder all began the process to become Presbyterian ministers. Hunter

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Pontius' Puddle



served as the Presbyterian missionary on the Pipestone Reserve (1894-5) until his sudden death. Ben never took up a charge due to ill health. After his theological training Thunder was appointed missionary to the Oak Lake Reserve in 1895 serving for six years. Later he served on the Birdtail and Pipestone reserves.

George Flett, a Métis, served with Rev. James Nisbet in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan (1866), and went on to be ordained a minister in The Presbyterian Church in Canada in 1875. He served as the minister on the Okanse Reserve covering five preaching points for 20 years until his retirement in 1895.

I do not claim this list is complete, because it is not. Nor do I put the title "first" on any of these. The story of Presbyterian ministry among the Native peoples of Canada has not been fully told; there is more to be learned.

REV. PETER BUSH, WINNIPEG

More youth, please

I thoroughly enjoyed the September article on Neil George from St. Columba-by-the-lake, Pointe Claire, Que.

We need more of these young people ! ! ! ! !

Thanks again for another great magazine.

GWEN PATTERSON, VIA EMAIL

I appreciate all that the PYPS contributors have to say. Having read each one at least twice, to make sure they were understood, I have comments.

Erin Woods: I like her definitions and have no difficulty except for one. Church: "Theme topics chosen by youth," and church that is "youth directed." Relate that to Job 12:12, "Is not wisdom found among the aged?" Would the wisdom of youth permit them to search out the wisdom of the aged, gaining an advantage for both in knowledge, and perhaps a closer fellowship?

Patricia and Ryan Browne: I can feel the ache in their hearts, and my heart aches for them. 1 Peter 5:2 says "Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must but because you are willing, as God wants you to be ..." Are we, all together, creating the problem? If so, we need to change! And right now!

Connie Purvis: Real Life! Connie, you are there and have been for some time, when you relate to the King "who has governed them since birth." My mind is filled with a hymn "Trust and obey, for there's no other way."

Alex Luyckx: You are so right when you wonder if all our assailants stem from a scheme of the devil. Of course they do, and young people are a prime target, especially those in a church. We all struggle with this all the time. How would you change the approach to the gospel? Can we all work on this together?

Brenden Sherratt: It sure hurts to have the obvious thrown at us. Thank God there are young people who will stand up and be counted. And there are lots of older gentlemen who will stand up with you if you will give them the chance. Forgive them if their knees are weak and they ask for your helping hand.

Michael Watt: Dancing is fun. I watched a group of teenagers perform an interpretive dance at an Easter service. It was worship. I think what you expressed was the joy of fellowship.

Jennifer Higgs and Erin Woods: Let's hope "Presbyterian" is synonymous with "Christian." It is not a perfect church, and the devil is hard at work in it, with dissenters, rumour-mongers and troublemakers. But I think they are there for a purpose, to at least make us work a little harder at our church life. We are comforted by the presence of the Holy Spirit and we are fed.

Nothing in any of these comments is intended to be critical. I want to join young people and have them join with me in worship. We may like different styles and I will encourage theirs, if they will encourage mine. (That is not a bargain, I will encourage them anyway.)

JACK VALLANCE, NANAIMO, B.C.

God will decide

Calvin Brown's May article is a straw-man argument that paints horns on progressive Christians. Heed the Bible's

advice in Acts 5: 38-39: "Leave them alone. For if this idea of theirs or its execution is of human origin it will collapse; but if it is from God you will never be able to put them down and risk finding yourselves at war with God."

When the emphasis of our faith is intellectual assent to theology, creeds and dogmas, we risk becoming adults of assured and of proud spirit as to the conclusions we have reached. The progressives have little or no theology to become conceited about. Sometimes they look to other sources, but they may be just considering the "lilies of the field."

ANDREW MITCHELL, NORTH SAANICH, B.C.

I was amused and concerned by the number of responses in the issues following Zander Dunn's March letter concerning a metaphorical interpretation of the virgin birth.

It was amusing to see what kindles people's interest to write a letter but concerning also to see the erosion of tolerance and diversity of opinion within our denomination. I wonder how a belief or a lack of belief can undermine faith? That makes no sense theologically or philosophically. I wonder also when belief in Jesus degenerated into belief about things about Jesus? The gospels contain divergent stories about some of the details of Jesus' life and ministry and that is something we need to remember and celebrate. It must cause some difficulty for those that put so much weight in the idea of the virgin birth to read that it wasn't important enough for either Mark or John to include in their gospels. However, the harder and more interesting question is how can one's faith be undermined?

REV. MARK A. TREMBLAY, KINGSTON, ONT.

It's a calling

I just read Jay Brennan's letter in the October issue. Since when did the ministry of Word and Sacrament become a career? It is not a career; it is a calling! God calls ministers to a congregation to help lead and fulfill the vision and mission of Jesus Christ for the church: making disciples. When these relationships between a minister and a congregation go wrong, for whatever reason, I believe the minister should have the integrity to seek a call where her or his gifts can be used for the building up and edification of the church; so that together, the minister and congregation can work with God to invite all to be alive in Jesus Christ.

SEAN J. FOSTER, OAKVILLE, ONT.

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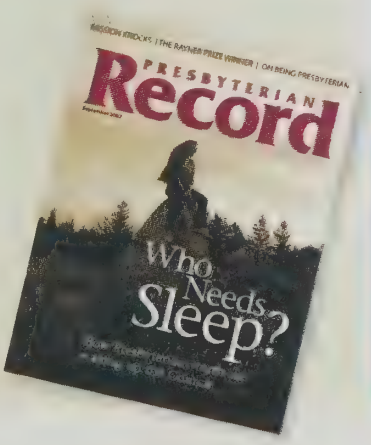
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A Community Of Love

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We will also be serving dinner for our 120 residents. Everyone in the building has a sense of community as they dine alongside their neighbours.

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People & Places

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During its year-long 165th anniversary celebrations, which began in November 2006, St. Andrew's, Sarnia, Ont., received great distinction when its organist of more than 20 years, Foster Hill, was honoured with the Grand Cross of the Most Illustrious Order of Merit by Queen Elizabeth II through her Governor General of Antigua and Barbuda, Sir James B. Carlisle. Hill was awarded for his ministry of music among young people. The congregation is extremely proud of Mr. Hill, who has a PhD in music.



The original meeting of the Renewal Fellowship was held at Willowdale, Ont., and so was the 25th anniversary. RF was created to affirm the authority of scripture and to work for spiritual renewal within our denomination. Rev. Chris Carter, board chair, cuts the cake, along with Al Clarkson, Mr. and Mrs. Bob Campbell, Judy and DonMacLeod (first chair). Photo by Bill Patterson.



St. Andrew's, Wingham, Ont., celebrated it's 145th anniversary in October with a golf tournament; and here's the winning team: Ralph Campbell, Merle Underwood, Joel Snell, Rev. Dr. Jim Czegledi, former Associate Secretary of Evangelism, and current minister, Rev. Bernie Skelding. Missing: Jeff Bloemberg. To see the anniversary cake, turn to our website.



There's mission to their ministry. Stonegate Ministry in Etobicoke, Ont., operates The Outreach Store (the name works on so many levels) which provides good clothing at affordable prices (some as low as a loonie!). In August they held a concert to sing out the name of Jesus. They attracted the attention of many in the surrounding apartment buildings. Hallelujah! More photos on the website.



Cake of the month: Jack Ronald is still smiling after 43 years of faithful service as an elder on the session of Greenbrier, Brantford, Ont. He was fittingly honoured back in April—with a huge slab cake and lots of frosting.



To move further into the future, the folks of the Knox AMS Auxiliary at Boularderie, Cape Breton, N.S., reenacted the first meeting of the group held in 1907. This way they embrace the unfolding universe by acknowledging their own story. From back left: Isabel Hawley, Tanya Grant, Annie Stivers, Ena Kuschnig, Rhoda MacLean, Christine MacLeod, Katherine Grant, Rev. Susan Smith. Front left: Thelma Grant, Marilyn MacKenna, Geertruida Schuurkamp, Kaye MacLean, Shirley Grant and Debbie MacLean.

Also on our website:

Yodelling in Ottawa, homecoming in Port Colborne, Ont., 50 years of Word and Sacrament in Kincardine, Ont., and much more.

Had cake lately?

Share your celebrations with the rest of the church.
Send your stories to PnP@presbyterianrecord.ca along with your digital photographs, **300 dpi minimum, high quality JPEGs**.
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To be considered for People and Places, photographs should be sharp and everyone clearly identified. The *Record* reserves the right to reject any photos not of sufficient quality. Photographs cannot be returned.

SPOTLIGHT



The first woman elder of Han-Ca East Presbytery was ordained at St. Timothy's, Etobicoke, on Oct. 28, which also marked the congregation's 11th anniversary. Rev. Dr. Dorcas Gordon, principal of Knox College preached, speaking about God's original intention that men and women work together as partners. From the left: Young Girl Kim (new elder), David Son (associate minister), Si Young Kim (new session member), Seung Ho Cho (Clerk of Session), In Kee Kim (senior minister), Wan Sup Myung (session member), Song Chan Chung (re-elected session member), Soo Jin Chung (associate minister), Hae Duck Yun (new elder), Dorcas Gordon, and Chang Ro Karl (session member).

UCC Moderator Focuses on Outreach

THE MODERATOR OF THE UNITED Church of Canada issued a letter to congregations calling for a commitment to outreach and serving others, and to abandon a preoccupation with declining membership.

"I am praying that more of us become concerned with Jesus' call to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless and visit those who are sick, lonely, or in prison," states Rev. David Giuliano in his letter. "I am praying that our preoccupation with getting people into church is transformed by a passion for getting the church out into the world. I am praying that we welcome strangers with a radical hospitality that sees in them the face of Christ—not an 'identifiable giver' or a 'potential committee member'! I am praying that our worries about buildings and budgets are overtaken by excitement for the mission of our church."

The letter is in response to a year of planning amongst the General Council Executive, who "discussed and discerned where the church's energy and resources are best spent," said Giuliano in an interview.

"Because of the challenge that we face in terms of numbers, it's easy to get distracted," he said. "Historically, the church has had power and status in society and has operated almost out of a sense of entitlement. But we don't have the social, political or cultural pull that we once had, and there is a dis-ease and discomfort about letting that go."

Giuliano said it was important to reaffirm that congregations are how most people experience the Church, and thier work and actions should be directed at being examples of Jesus' call.

Several priorities were set by the executive, including assisting congregations as the primary expression of the church's mission, raising up and equipping strong leadership, embracing the ministry of youth and young adults, and a renewed commitment to healing relationships with First Nations, becoming an inter-cultural church, and doing justice to the earth. As a result, more than 20 positions have been terminated, and beginning in 2009 grants within Canada and to global partners will be reduced.

"Our hope is not for our survival or even growth, but in what God can accomplish through us," states the letter. "The health and vitality of our congregations depends on our response to the suffering of the world around us." ■ *–AM*

Theologian McLelland Honoured

The future is marked in the name of a respected professor. BY JOEL COPPIETERS

JOSEPH C. MCLELLAND, PROFESSOR, teacher, pastor and mentor for 50 years at Presbyterian College, Montreal, was honoured by having the college library named for him in October.

The dedication ceremony was well attended by students and staff from the College as well as dignitaries from the affiliated theological seminaries. Rev. Dr. McLelland's wife of 60 years, Audrey, and several family members shared in the occasion. The evening was capped by the unveiling of a plaque and the launch of McLelland's latest book, *Understanding the Faith*, a collection of essays, which is the first volume of the new *Presbyterian College Studies in Theology and Ministry*. McLelland is the author of countless articles, theological briefs and books that grace the shelves of the library where he spent so many hours.

At the dedication ceremony, current librarian Dr. Dan Shute gave an entertaining overview of the twists and turns the library went through as it reflected the struggling growth of the College. Originally conceived by a group of local Presbyterian leaders in 1864, the College got its charter in 1865, and then in 1867 a board of directors, a temporary home in a church basement and its first donation of books—1,000 volumes from Knox College in Toronto. In 1871, three years after getting its first professor, the College got its first building. Scottish merchant David Morrice added a wing for a library at his own expense in 1881. The College's current building with its library was completed in 1963.

The collection described by a Scottish diplomat in 1915 "as one of the finest theological libraries in Canada" has ebbed and flowed over the years. It was actually targeted to disappear as a separate entity when the College's affiliation with the McGill Faculty of Religious Studies in 1969 originally called for its then 25,000 volumes to be amalgamated into the larger collection. When the transition point arrived however, the Divinity Hall library at McGill had already absorbed the United and Diocesan Colleges' libraries and could not absorb anymore for lack of space. When Rev. Dr. William Klempa became principal of the College in 1978, he steered the library in the direction of Reformed history and theology, with a good representation of Biblical commentaries and reference works. The process has continued under the leadership of Rev. Dr. John Vissers.

As the College strives to "shape transformational church leaders"... naming the historic library after a respected professor who continues to publish cutting edge essays is a wise step

As the College strives to "shape transformational church leaders" according to its current mission statement, the need for an educated clergy rooted in good theological literature old and new is crucial. Naming a library rich with historic volumes after a respected veteran professor who continues to publish cutting edge essays that make the faith relevant to a changing world is a wise step in that endeavor. ■



John Vissers, principal of Presbyterian College and Joseph McLelland



A deliberately-set fire at Knox, Cannington, has devastated the congregation and the community.

Historic church lost in fire

A FIRE REPORTEDLY SET BY A LOCAL young offender who was out on bail has destroyed Knox, Cannington, Ont. The 144-year-old building in the Presbytery of Lindsay-Peterborough was set ablaze on the morning of Oct. 7. The remains of the building were demolished before the unstable walls could fall down on their own. No one was injured.

Judy Hein, whose official title at Cannington is Program Leadership Developer but has been more of a lay minister for the last two years when she's been the only person on staff, said the congregation is "definitely looking to build again," but admits there is a long way to go before that happens. Thanksgiving service was held in the session clerk's living room, and the congregation is now meeting in a local seniors' home.

Hein said the community has been extremely supportive, and Woodville Community Presbyterian Church opened its doors so Cannington could go ahead with an already-planned fundraiser.

An old Bible, one of the few items salvaged from the fire, was found completely intact—neither burned from the flames nor wet from the fireman's hose. "It shows that through this, the Word of God has survived," said Hein. "It gives people hope."

Presbytery clerk Rev. Reg McMillan said he has received many emails and phone calls expressing support for the Knox congregation. He added that the congregation is asking for prayers for the young person who set the fire, and for the 17-year-old's family.

As reported in the *Lindsay Post*, police said the offender faces 15 charges in connection with the fire and has appeared in court for a bail hearing. Trinity United, located a few blocks away, was also burned (though the damage was much less), as were five vehicles parked in various locations.

Located in a small town of 2,000, Knox, Cannington, is part of an open-door cluster along with St. John's, Cresswell, and Wick Presbyterian Church. Police and fire officials are still investigating. ■ *–AM*

2008 E.H. Johnson recipient named

THE 2008 RECIPIENT OF THE E.H. Johnson Award is Mercy Amba Oduyoye of Ghana. The award is named for the late Rev. Dr. E.H. Johnson and is given to someone on "the cutting edge of mission."

Oduyoye created The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians in 1989, which draws attention to African women's theology and still serves as coordinator of study commissions. She also established the Institute of African Women in Religion and Culture at Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon, Ghana, where she currently serves as its director. She taught at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, in the Department of Religious Studies, for 12 years, and is also a published author of both prose and poetry.

Oduyoye has been involved in the ecumenical movement for more than three decades, with 13 years service in various capacities at the World Council of Churches. Her dedication to ecumenism highlights a personal spiritual yearning that all should be one. A Ghanaian Methodist, she is married to Adedoyin Modupe Oduyoye, a Nigerian Anglican.

"It is amazing, the opportunities that have come my way," said Oduyoye in a press release, "all arising from the then-unusual step of entering university in 1959 to study theology. Glory to God."

The award will be presented during the E. H. Johnson luncheon during the 134th General Assembly in Ottawa next June. ■

New Online Resource

A NEW ONLINE TEACHER TRAINING program is available, free to Presbyterian congregations. The Opening Doors to Discipleship program is suitable for both seasoned and new teachers, can be completed in any order and at any pace. It is hoped that teachers in a congregation will take the course with their minister or a mentor from their church.

"I think this is a pretty exciting project," said Dorothy Henderson, project manager and editor, and the Presbyterian Church's associate secretary for Christian education. "It is, to my knowledge, the first product of its kind and I have lots of interest from other denominations wanting to use this resource."

The course is a joint effort of five denominations (all members of PREP—Presbyterian and Reformed Educational Partnership), though the PCC has taken a leading role with four Presbyterians editing, writing, designing, and directing the program.

The course offers topics such as understanding adult learning, using creative writing and drama, discipline in the church school, how children and youth learn, and designing a welcoming environment. The program is broken down into three sections: teacher training skills, basic Bible, and Reformed/Presbyterian beliefs. Currently, only the first is available; the others will be released next year. An online discussion forum—something that could be a useful link for people all over the world—is also offered.

For more information visitopeningdoorstodiscipleship.com. ■ *–AM*

Christmas at YSM

YONGE STREET MISSION'S ANNUAL Christmas market will open from Dec. 12 to Dec. 22, enabling hundreds of families to shop affordably. A 20-year-plus tradition, the Toronto mission's gymnasium will be packed with items donated for this purpose. Clients register in November to be eligible. This year, through various distribution programs, YSM will serve more than 4,000 children and adults.

In its infancy, the market was sponsored primarily by schools and churches. Today, corporate sponsors help make the huge event possible, donating food, toys and volunteer hours. Last year, 1,000 volunteers donated 3,200 hours to help with the mission's Christmas programs.

YSM also hosts banquets, pageants, and outings for the community, delivers gift boxes to shut-in seniors and isolated adults, and the doors are opened to homeless street youth on Christmas Day. ■

WCC Essay Contest

STUDENTS OF THEOLOGY AND young theologians are invited by the World Council of Churches to bring their perspective to the discussion about the future of the ecumenical movement by participating in an essay competition to mark the Council's 60th anniversary.

Both clergy and lay persons are asked to address the theme "Making a Difference Together—Prospects for Ecumenism in the 21st Century." The best six essays will be presented by the authors at an international consultation in Bossey, Switzerland, in late 2008. Other selected essays will be published by the WCC.

Essays should be written in English, be between 5,000 and 6,000 words, and should not have been published previously. The deadline is Feb. 28, 2008. For more information visit www.oikoumene.org/contest. ■



Trinity-goers Harry and Kathryn Thompson with grandson John Lucas, daughter Christine and her husband, Harry.

Trinity Hopeful for Future

First meeting is positive, productive event. BY AMY MACLACHLAN

THE REMAINING CONGREGATION AT Trinity, Oro, is enthusiastic, joyful and ready to re-build their church.

At a congregational meeting at Trinity on Oct. 25, about 50 people gathered to ask questions, discuss a game plan and sign up for volunteer duties so that worship could continue on Nov. 4 at 10:00—the first Sunday as a much smaller congregation. The mood was uplifting as people greeted each other with hugs and smiles, and asked for blessings on Connexus.

"We're both on the same journey, we're just on different paths," said Kathryn Thompson, a member for 12 years, which means she was around when Trinity was three small congregations that had yet to amalgamate. "They're praying for us and we're praying for them."

"We're working for the same boss," said her husband, Harry Thompson, with a smile.

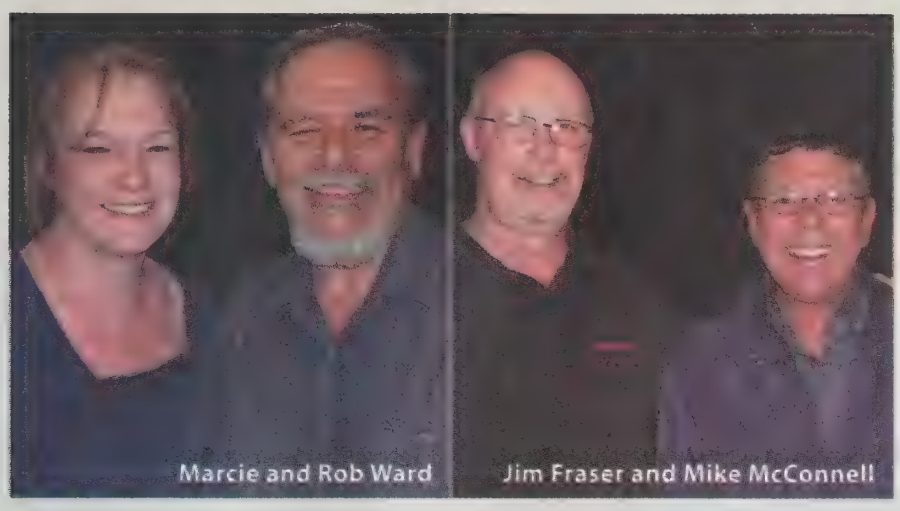
The majority of the 1,000-plus members and adherents of the old Trinity left on Oct. 31, following their minister, Rev. Carey Nieuwhof out of the PCC to his newly born Connexus Community Church, which is linked to a non-denominational conservative congregation in the U.S.

Rev. Neal Mathers, minister at Emmanuel, Nottawa, and interim moderator at Trinity, led the meeting in prayer. His sermon, during which he read from 1 Corinthians 13, called for "trust, hope and love."

"You can never have two visions within one congregation, and separation has to happen if both visions are going to flourish," Mathers began. "Your vision is just forming. It's like a baby—you don't know whether to love it, spank it, or change it! There is always anxiety around birth and parenthood, especially when the pregnancy took us unaware. But we're taking the first baby steps.

"It's okay that the vision is new and small and fragile, because God is the one who gives vision, and He will help it flourish."

Besides this, Mathers, who was set



Marcie and Rob Ward

Jim Fraser and Mike McConnell

to lead worship on Nov. 4, also called for patience, noting that it will likely be six months before elders will be elected, and therefore at least that long before the congregation can call a new minister. "It's not going to be easy," he said. "We're starting at ground zero. There will be a lot of work. It's more important to go slowly, do things well, and build a solid foundation."

About half of the people at the meeting were long-time Trinity goers; many from one of the three original congregations. It was mentioned that although only about 50 people showed up, many had called or emailed to say they wanted to attend but were unable. It was also noted that some who were expected to follow Nieuwhof had attended the meeting. Such signs gave the group hope for the future.

"I remember asking God, why do things have to change? I'm happy. I'm comfortable," said Kathryn Thompson, recalling her apprehension when it was clear there would be a split. "And a small voice inside me said, 'When you were in your mother's womb, you were warm, happy and comfortable. You didn't want things to change then either. But I have bigger plans for you.'"

Everyone signed up for volunteer duties, covering everything from musicians to greeters, to ushers to Sunday school teachers, to coffee brewers, and facility managers. By the end of the night, nearly all vacancies were filled. Many noted they were happy to have a church home again, as several had left Trinity amidst the turmoil. They were also looking forward to "being fed," saying that because Nieuwhof's focus was ministering to "the lost," long-time Christians were often left without any spiritual nurturing or growth opportunities.

"I'm looking forward to a community church where we can participate together in serving God," said Suzanne Cameron, a part of Trinity since it met in a school back in 2000, just after the amalgamation. "There will always be different styles of worship. We have to love and honour people's convictions and bless them if that's their vision to serve the Lord."

'We're starting at ground zero. There will be a lot of work. It's important to go slowly and build a solid foundation'

Despite the trauma of a congregation split, many identified lessons learned, and are looking forward to a new beginning.

"It's about listening to God and seeking His Kingdom," said Marcie Ward, whose husband, Rob has attended Trinity for about 10 years. "Seek the Kingdom and God will build the Church. Nothing will stop Him. This isn't a setback, it's a continuum. If we allow God to work, He will be faithful."

The next meeting was scheduled for Nov. 15, when the new finance team hoped to have a budget ready to propose to the congregation. ■

BUILDING HOPE

Christmas at Anishinabe Place of Hope



A Place of Hope
A Place of Pride
Just be yourself
And come inside

A Place of love and goodwill to all
Where someone will always listen
No concern or problem ever too small
Where we can grow and be on our way

From all walks of life
We have come to this place with hope
To rekindle the smile in our hearts

God is watching and he wants us to know
No matter where we've been or come from
We can finally call this Place of Hope
"Our Home"



WICM

Thank you Lord for all these souls
You have sent our way.
Volunteers, Churches, Strangers
Who don't yet know us
Reaching out, lending a hand
Helping us make the transition
To this Wonderful New Place

We thank you Lord for all your Grace

–Written by Cheryl, a new resident

Your Christmas donation will enrich the lives of people at Anishinabe Place of Hope.

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Faith a hot issue

THE BARNA GROUP—American researcher George Barna has been surveying attitudes and responses to Christianity for several decades. He highlighted four major themes to emerge in recent years: "First of all," noted Barna, "Americans are very comfortable with religious faith. Faith and spirituality remain hot issues in people's lives. (A large majority claims to be "deeply spiritual" and say that their religious faith is "very important," but only 15 per cent of those who regularly attend a Christian church ranked their relationship with God as the top priority in their life.)

"Second, people do not have an accurate view of themselves when it comes to spirituality. They have positive feelings about the importance of faith, but their faith is rarely the focal point of their life or a critical factor in their decision-making." Barna's third theme was that if people's faith is objectively measured against a biblical standard of how faith is to be practiced, Americans are spiritually lukewarm. Finally, Barna felt that the most intriguing blip on the radar screen is the growth within a number of movements of deeply spiritual people who are departing from conventional forms and communities of faith. "The Revolutionary community—which incorporates divergent but compatible groups of people who are seeking to make their faith the driving force in their life—is reshaping American faith in ways which we are just beginning to understand."

Water, water, everywhere

ENI—Churches in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe's second largest city, have begun to supply residents with water for domestic use in an attempt to lessen the effects of shortages made worse by a struggle over control of the water supply. City authorities have imposed water-rationing measures that permit residents access to water for only a few hours every three days.

Pastor Ray Motsi, the convenor of an interdenominational group said Bulawayo's churches were working with the city council to identify the most vulnerable areas. The Zimbabwe government has refused to take any action to deal with water shortages in the city, which has 1.5 million residents, unless the city council agreed to hand over the supply of water to the State-run Zimbabwe National Water Authority.

—The Oxford-based Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility plans to bring together representatives of the environmental and business sectors to examine how water supplies can be maintained in the face of rising demand, climate change and pollution. The group says the issue of water affects regions once thought to have plentiful supplies.

—The Geneva-based Ecumenical Water Network says that only 0.008 percent of the planet's water is available for consumption. "Water must be used efficiently for agricultural and industrial, as well as for domestic use," the network has explained.

Exactly good laughter

ENI—"Although the Bible doesn't say that Jesus laughed, I think that the evangelists didn't need to write about it because he would always have been laughing," said Rev. Nobuhisa Yamakita, chairperson of the Japan Confederation of Christian Churches, which links Roman Catholic, Anglican and Protestant denominations.

Christianity, he said, is "a religion of light, love and life to the last, the lost and the least." But he says he is now also interested in another L, for laughter.

The Japanese pastor is the author of *The Good News and Laughter: This is Exactly Good Laughter*. "Japanese Christians are serious but have no joy. The churches have such an atmosphere that it is unwise to laugh there. The Japanese word for joy appears 800 times in the Bible. I think that (churchgoers) can be more cheerful," said Yamakita. "I get troubled like everybody else. In the United Church of Christ in Japan, I keep taking beatings like a sandbag. But Psalm 2:4 says, 'He who sits in the heavens laughs.'"

Protestants apologize

ENI—The Protestant Church in the Netherlands has apologized to Pentecostals for negative attitudes held towards them in the past.

"Just as some people regard Muslims nowadays, enlightenment thinkers held you in contempt and viewed you as backward," the church's general secretary Bas Plaisier said at celebrations in Amsterdam to mark the centenary of the Dutch Pentecostal movement.

Pentecostalism is a Christian renewal movement dating from the early 20th century, and is now seen as one of the fastest growing Christian movements in the world. The first Pentecostal church in the Netherlands was founded in Amsterdam in 1907.

Pilgrimage

ENI—The rising popularity of religious pilgrimages stems from a modern lifestyle linked to a constant search for new experiences, according to the bishop of Tarbes and Lourdes, the site of the famous Roman Catholic pilgrimage site in France.

French Bishop Jacques Perrier said, "The milieu in which we live promotes anything new or extraordinary, while religious life has always been based on regularity, which is extremely boring for a modern person who wants something extraordinary." ■

Just Wonderful!

Candy canes, Santa, Christmas tree and stables. BY ANDREW FAIZ

If you want to read my column (hi, mom!) this month, you'll first have to do some homework. I'd like you to flip around the magazine you hold in your hands and take a look at the illustrations, from the cover to the back. I'll wait …

… Ah, you're back.

So, what do you think? What did you think of Julie Todaro's contribution on page 31? Isn't it absolutely brilliant? Right next to it is Alexa Thomson-McWilliams' artwork. There

The kids see things for what they are; they aren't afraid of the world

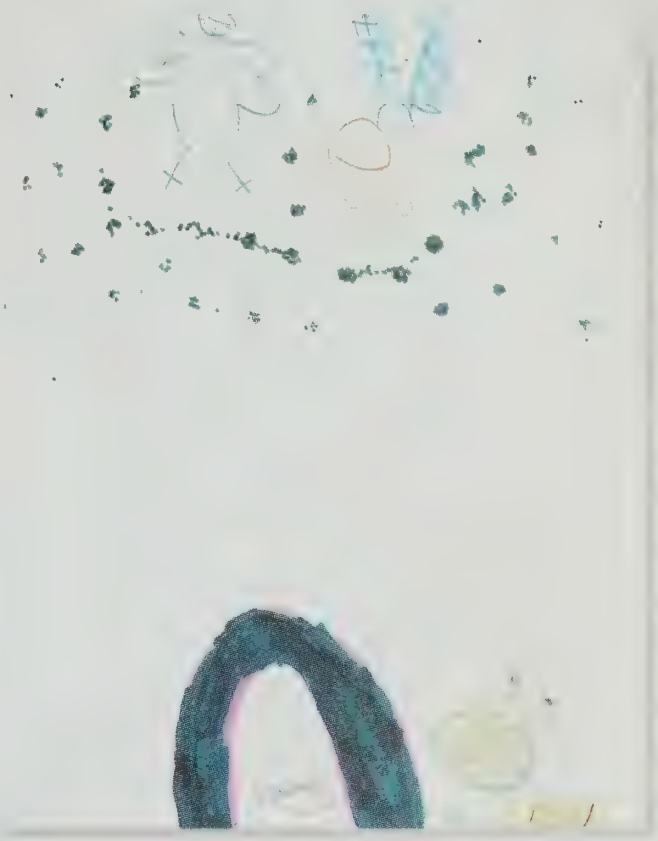
is something wonderful happening in those two drawings. These two smart 10-year-old girls have done it without a lick of ideology or superiority. They've brilliantly captured Christmas.

(Because I have to: my daughter's drawing on this page makes the same point. It is a stable scene with an angel and a reindeer hovering above, showering blessings.)

These girls have encapsulated Christmas into one image—and they aren't alone. Look at any of the illustrations. Ama Ampofo (Benediction, page 51) is of Ghanaian descent, but her imagery is completely Canadian. (Not a lot of pine forests in Ghana; of course, candy cane horsey angels are universal.) Or go to page 21: the mixed media wreath, which effortlessly blends classic iconography with a decidedly modern twist. The past, the present, yesterday, today, theology, culture—all smushed into one image.

Staying on the same page: I know ministers are overbusy this time of year, may I suggest that for one of your sermons you put Baillie Ferguson's work up on a board at the front of the sanctuary. What more is there to say? It's all there—with God (in blue) above the neo-classical scene. Or Bethany Morton's (on the cover). Bringing another baby to the manger is nothing short of brilliant. Again, another sermon.

But, have I got it wrong? Candy canes, Santa, Christmas tree and stables. Are these signs of the end times; the apocalypse comes not with a bang but with a whimper? (I have to declare my bias: I mistrust teddy bears ever since the Care Bears.) Do candy cane horsey angels diminish the manger scene? Is this the triumph of materialism over spirituality? Is the game lost?



Zahra Faiz, age 5, Gateway Community, Toronto

My daughter's knowledge of theology is weak; her formal education has been limited to public school. So, when she conflates reindeer with angels, I really should take the blame. I have failed as a parent to properly instruct her. But, perhaps she's being ironic. Perhaps her drawing is a post-post-modern critique of Christmas.

Or perhaps it's a Spongian approach to Christmas, clear cutting the encrusted icons. This is what post-post-post-modernist apologetics might look like.

Or, conversely, does this iconography tell us that these children get it? That the stable is the base, is at the heart of things, and because of the stable, precisely due to the manger, there is joy in the world? That instead of the end, this is the beginning of time? The kids see things for what they are; they aren't afraid of the world, or of popular culture. They aren't afraid of Santa, aren't worried that he will gobble up their faith. They recognize that Santa is a metaphor for happiness which exists only because the manger exists.

And, isn't that just wonderful! ■

Andrew Faiz is the managing editor of the Record *and has a public education himself. Happy Christmas!*

Let the Church Preach

Christmas pageants make real what we already believe. BY COLIN CROSS



Lindsay Richardson, age 7, Knox, Oakville, Ont.

In 1843, Charles Dickens described Christmas as "a good time: a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time, the only time I know of in the long calendar of the year when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of other people below them as if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys" (*A Christmas Carol*).

Call it madness, call it absence of mind, call it a strange collective hysteria, call it what you will: Christmas is a time when sane people go mad and mad people become sane. It happens but once a year, and in it—or by it—an exception is made to the accustomed order of things, as if to say: "Okay folks, now we are going to do things differently for a time, so please stand by for station identification. Don't panic! We'll return to regular programming as soon as possible."

Christmas in the West may occasion shocking greed and debauchery—but both hearts and treasuries fly open, as if by magic. The ordinarily distrustful even enter God's house upon Christmas Eve. Yes, it sometimes takes the curl out of their naturally curly hair, but people make detours from


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CHRISTMAS PAGEANTS



Morgan Acker, age 15, Knox, Harvey, N.B.

Childhood fancy? Perhaps. But it is clear that at this extraordinary time of year something hindering is removed, and by the outreaching Spirit of God a veil falls away—in a flash, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye

the broad road of customary life. Then, and only then, "the bird of dawning singeth all night long/ And then, they say, no spirit dares stir abroad/ The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike/ No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm/So hallow'd and so gracious is the time" (*Hamlet*).

Every child knows this. Every year, growing up, I knew exactly when Christmas began. It began with the first snowflake outside my window; first a snowflake, then a wish, then a prayer, then another snowflake—and another, and another. Not only was heaven falling to earth, but Christmas was on its way, and with it the unbidden sense of another world, so bright, so beautiful, so full of wonder. I was out of doors in a flash, leaping, dancing, running in circles, trying to catch the snow in my hands, trying to see what a snowflake looked like before it melted away. I had been stabbed, flashed even—with an irresistible lightning bolt of joy.

Yes, I grew up in Canada, where winters are cold and snow obligatory, but that's entirely beside the point. That first snowflake started a whole freight train of joy that careened wildly, magically, breathlessly, all the way to Christmas. It would just build and build and build, each succeeding day closer to The Day more magical than the last, till Christmas came. "O great mystery; O wonderful sacrament; that animals should see the new-born Lord, lying in a manger!"

And then there was the Christmas pageant at First Baptist Church—I was not yet a Presbyterian—directed with military precision by a certain Mrs. D., beloved if brutal maven of the flannelgraph whose casting calls were not noted for their flexibility, any more than her ideas about wardrobe, script, set design, or blocking. "Every Christmas it's the same; I always end up playing a shepherd," I recall saying at the time, not long after Charles Schulz gave Shermy the self-same line. (But having attended Sunday School in the days before child-centered education, I knew how to keep my mouth shut.) Always Christmas but never Joseph. Sigh! Out came the red-checkered bathrobe.

But by the time the lights went up on pageant night and our story-telling began, that strange hush, that something, that Someone, even, came back. Suddenly I began to hear what C. S. Lewis called the "real story . . . the Great Story, which no one on earth has read: which goes on forever: in which every chapter is better than the one before."

Childhood fancy? Perhaps. But it is clear that at this extraordinary time of year something hindering is removed, and by the outreaching Spirit of God a veil falls away—in a flash, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.

"The value of story," Lewis once wrote, "is that it takes all the things we know and restores to them the rich significance which has been hidden by 'the veil of familiarity.' The child enjoys his cold meat (otherwise dull to him) by pretending it is buffalo, just killed with his or her own bow and arrow. And the child is wise. The real meat comes back to him or her more savoury for having been dipped in a story; you might say that only then is it the real meat." This is how the Gospels function, more so at Christmas than any other time of the year. They are a new kind of literature for a new reality, "deeper, more wonderful, more like places in a story: in a story you have never heard but very much want to know"(Lewis, *The Last Battle*)—a reality at once ordinary, after all, Jesus was just a carpenter from Nazareth like his father before him, right? Or was he? And if this is the case, how do we, the church, become storytellers for new ages, new peoples, new generations?

Credit for inventing the Christmas pageant goes to Francis of Assisi (1181–1226). Pilgrimages to Bethlehem had been underway since the fourth century, after the pagan temple Hadrian had built there (to irritate Christians) was duly removed by Constantine, though both Justin Martyr (100–165) and Origen (185–254) had already claimed to have seen the "actual manger" where Christ was born, not to ➤



Amiens, age 7, Knox, Oakville, Ont.



Baillie Ferguson, age 16, Homeville, N.S.



Elizabeth Munro, age 11, Armour Heights, Toronto



Cora, Seth, Marilyn, Melinda and Joshua, St. Paul's, Brampton, Ont.







Scenes from a Walk to Bethlehem, in Pentiction, B.C. This year's event will happen Nov. 30th, Dec. 1st and 2nd.

mention the countless painters and iconographers who were hard at work creating images of the nativity now considered normative.

On his way to Rome in 1223, Francis stopped in the tiny village of Greccio, about 100 kilometres east of Rome. On Christmas Eve, he found a tiny grotto in the mountains and placed a donkey, an ox, and a small group of villagers around a small free-standing crib (or crèche). The results were electrifying. "Nor was this an unfitting vision," wrote Assisi biographer Thomas of Celano, "for in the hearts of many the child Jesus really had been forgotten, but now, by his grace and through his servant Francis, he had been brought back to life." In the words of author John Fisher, Francis "made real what he already believed," and the town of Greccio was never the same again. In fact Greccio has become, for many, the "new Bethlehem."

Telling the story—the Great Story. Making real what we already believe. Bringing back to life. Recovering the unbidden sense of another world—so bright, so beautiful, so full of wonder. Christmas is not only a unique time in the life of every child, it's a unique time in the life of the church—and an unprecedented opportunity for daring and creative ministry. Call it madness, but the doors swing open, and hearts and minds of every description are suddenly willing to hear the Gospel. Let the church preach, to the greater glory of God. ■

Rev. Colin Cross is the minister at St. Andrew's, Penticton, B.C.

The Little Church that Could

Yes, Christmas is the shining star of Western civilization. But how can one take advantage of this? What's a Presbyterian to do, when daring innovations are not exactly the hallmark of our tradition? For years I have had to tiptoe through ministry, a little tea here, a little tea there, constrained by the expectation that I work in precisely the same way one worked 60 years ago; as if the world had not changed; as if whole new generations—including my own generation—had never been born. "We'll always have retired people coming to this church," one old-timer kept saying to me. "We're content; we're just the way we're supposed to be." The implication? "Be quiet. Do nothing. Keep on singing the oldest hymns till the cows come home—and die—and call that 'ministry.' Community outreach? Are you kidding? It might mean touching the choir loft or moving the pulpit. It might mean an untimely end to the same old, same old. (Yawn!) So just be quiet, little boy, and do what you're told." As the new kid in ministry I felt like a ghost in my own parish. And meanwhile, teacup by teacup, the great slip sideways into obsolescent mediocrity went on apace.

Thank God we decided not to be ruled by the old timer! Instead, St. Andrew's, Penticton, B.C., has staged three over-the-top Walks to Bethlehem, with more to come. Out of nothing, we built an extravagant artisans' marketplace, an ancient Near Eastern food fair, a Roman garrison, a synagogue. We brought in live animals. We staged a play in the sanctuary. We offered a live music café in the fellowship hall. We took photos of the public in Palestinian garb. Yes, we moved the pulpit. Yes, we borrowed the choir loft. What happened? Something beyond our wildest expectations ... Christmas. Larger than life, deeper than time. And St. Andrew's, Penticton, will never be the same.–*CC*

The Journey of Hope

Little miracles accumulated to create a great experience.

BY IRMA BULL

Little things confound the wise and contain God's greatest gifts. Signs of God's love surround us, yet often go unnoticed. The gift of a starry night, the smile of a stranger or the fragrance of a flower could touch your soul at just the right moment. Life is a difficult journey but people make it harder when they close their eyes to the messages God sends every day. Yet every year in Bruce Mines, a small northern Ontario village, people trudge through the snow to experience the Christmas story. People come by busloads. When I first heard about this Holy Walk, my imagination ran with it.

My vision was an interactive play involving the audience in a guided walk to Bethlehem. The idea was presented as a 50th anniversary project for our church, St. Giles', St. Catharines, Ont. Our minister, Rev. Tijs Theijsmeijer, was a very supportive advisor. The skepticism from the congregation was understandable. "December is too cold. No one would walk outdoors. It's too dangerous taking people across a busy street at night. Finding 150 people, actors and crew, is impossible. Costumes? Sets? Do you know how much this would cost?" On top of that I added my own mental note: the play hadn't even been written yet. Surprisingly, we got the green light, and I sat down in front of white paper in the summer of 2003 and started hyperventilating. What was I thinking? How could I write about these holy people and do them justice? Once I pondered how I would react if my daughter came home saying she was a pregnant virgin who had talked to an angel, the ideas just flowed. These were ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances and they rose to the task. God didn't wave a magic wand over them. They had to deal with the problems their visions created for them, just as we have to deal with ours. And my fingers started typing.



Kwadwo Ampofo, age 8, Gateway Community, Toronto

We got some money from the Experimental Fund of the Presbyterian Church. That financing made it feasible. People came forward. Very quickly we had a producer, musical director, stage manager, public relations, set designer, carpenters and a few costumes. We even had the most beautiful stained glass lanterns for ➤



Matthew Wegman, St. Paul's Carluke, Ancaster, Ont.

the outdoor garden scenes. We had light for the way, a reason to hope.

Then things went awry. People were too busy to commit to the play; many were heavily involved in regular church activities in addition to our anniversary events. A financial deficit became a big concern in our church, adding pressure. Then another crisis in the congregation threatened to divide us. It took everyone's mind and energy for months. By now it was spring 2004. Plans for the play were stalled. It looked rather bleak. Failure was a distinct possibility but I figured that God must have a reason for taking us in this direction and surely some good would come of it. In one of my many prayers I remember saying, "What a mess. There's no way I can do this. It's mighty hopeless, but I'll keep going. It'll be quite a miracle if You pull it off, Lord."

And then, just as suddenly, it began to come together again. One woman single-handedly outfitted a cast of more than 100 people. We found a great director. Ordinary people became wonderful actors, amazing us all. Volunteers came from outside the church too. One man offered to bring shepherds and real animals. Like a puzzle, pieces started falling into place. We were all novices but we supported and encouraged each other. Many of us, strangers when we started this project, became friends. This was a mammoth undertaking but by October I was convinced it would work.

The night of the first performance came, a clear night with stars. We had a steady stream of people, until the church was half full. The audience watched the Journey of Hope, then became part of it as they were led in small groups to Rio Lane, the street of a million lights, known as Bethlehem for this weekend. Told to look for three signs, they were confronted by the outcasts, the sellers, the rich, the poor and the angelic. On the return journey, they carried candles. Almost everyone passed by the baby tucked quietly in our church nursery and most of them never noticed. Only later during refreshments, when Rev. Tijs talked about the meaning of the signs, did people realize they had missed the child.

Seeing the play as a whole, the actors and crew really got into the spirit of it. The audience grew for each performance. At the final performance on Sunday, people were standing in line waiting to get into the church. A full house! Some had come three times to see it. One woman said she had brought her teenagers kicking and screaming but they left saying it was so awesome.

The reaction to the play was indescribable. We felt truly blessed as people spoke of the deep feelings it had evoked for them. Each of us had contributed talents and resources for something greater than ourselves. There were magic moments when you could feel the grace of God among us. None of us knew how this would turn out. It was a lot of work, yet what a privilege to touch the lives of people, especially those who do not go to church, with the message of love, carried over 2,000 years ago by a tiny child with outstretched arms, a child who still reaches out in little miracles every day of our lives. We are all on a journey of hope. Watch for the signs. ■

Irma Bull lives in St. Catharines, Ont.



Emily O'Brien, Trafalgar, Oakville, Ont.



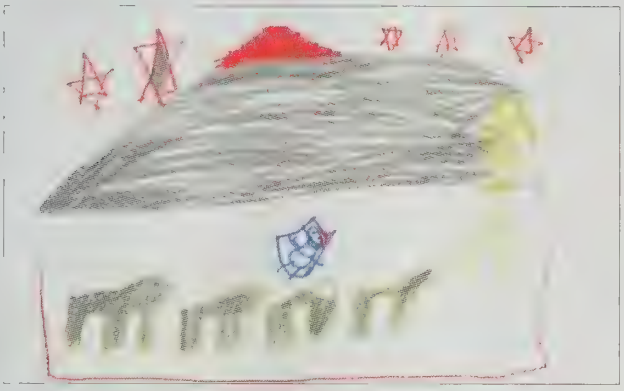
Alex, age 5, Knox, Oakville, Ont.



Lauren Maul, age 5, Knox, Oakville, Ont.



John, age 6, Knox, Oakville, Ont.



Emily, age 4, Westminster, Paisley, Ont.



Jakob, age 7, Westminster, Paisley, Ont.

Something Special

So much talent, shared openly. BY COVER CONTEST COMMITTEE

They start trickling in during September and by the deadline date the file is very thick. Then the fun begins–lots of oohing and ahing, endless exclamations of, "how cute" and "check this one out."

And then the work begins: only one can be on the cover. This year we had many very strong candidates and we debated, discussed, advocated for them all.

It is not easy to choose, and if we didn't have a deadline, perhaps we never would. We look for skill, of course, but that varies at different age levels. So, we look for imagination; but that too is partially a function of age. We also look for understanding: how the gospels are interpreted and revealed through the drawings.

Our cover this year–by Bethany Morton, age 12, Glencoe, Ont.–is a simple, strong image of a classic manger scene. But this one looks as though it could happen next door. The Wise Men are now replaced by ordinary folks who have left behind a roast in the oven, that phone call to a far-away friend, a train set or Barbie dolls to be part of something they just know is far more special.

Jennifer Reid's–Knox, Dunnville, Ont.–stained glass window, which is found on the cover of our pull-out Advent calendar is a masterwork. Once again it is a mixture of the ➤



The winning entry: Bethany Morton, age 12, Glencoe, Ont.

COVER ART CONTEST



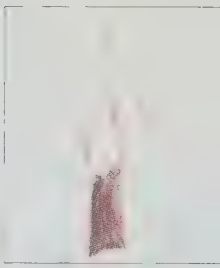
Jemeila Rankin, age 9,
Weston, Mississauga, Ont.



Daniel Ferris, age 8
St Andrew's, Alma, Ont.



Mackenzie Beam, age 6, St Andrew's, Alma, Ont.



Reginald Knight, age 6
St Andrew's, Alma, Ont.



Maggie, age 5, Westmi
Paisley, Ont.



Madison Ticehurst, age 7, Beaconsfield, Que.



Michaela Beam, age 8,
St Andrew's, Alma, Ont.



Marcie Landman,
St Andrew's, Alma, Ont.



Cassidy Montgomery, age 7,
Mississauga, Ont.

The Wise Men are now replaced by ordinary folks who have left behind a roast in the oven, that phone call to a far-away friend, a train set or Barbie dolls to be part of something they just know is far more special.

classical and the modern with a strong theological centre. Look at it with great care; all the important elements are there within the cubist presentation.

A different lesson is learned by the drawing found on the top of page 24. While his autism holds Matthew Wegman back in some areas, his skills as an artist are gifts he can openly share; and he does so by drawing the Christmas program cover at St. Paul's, Carluke.

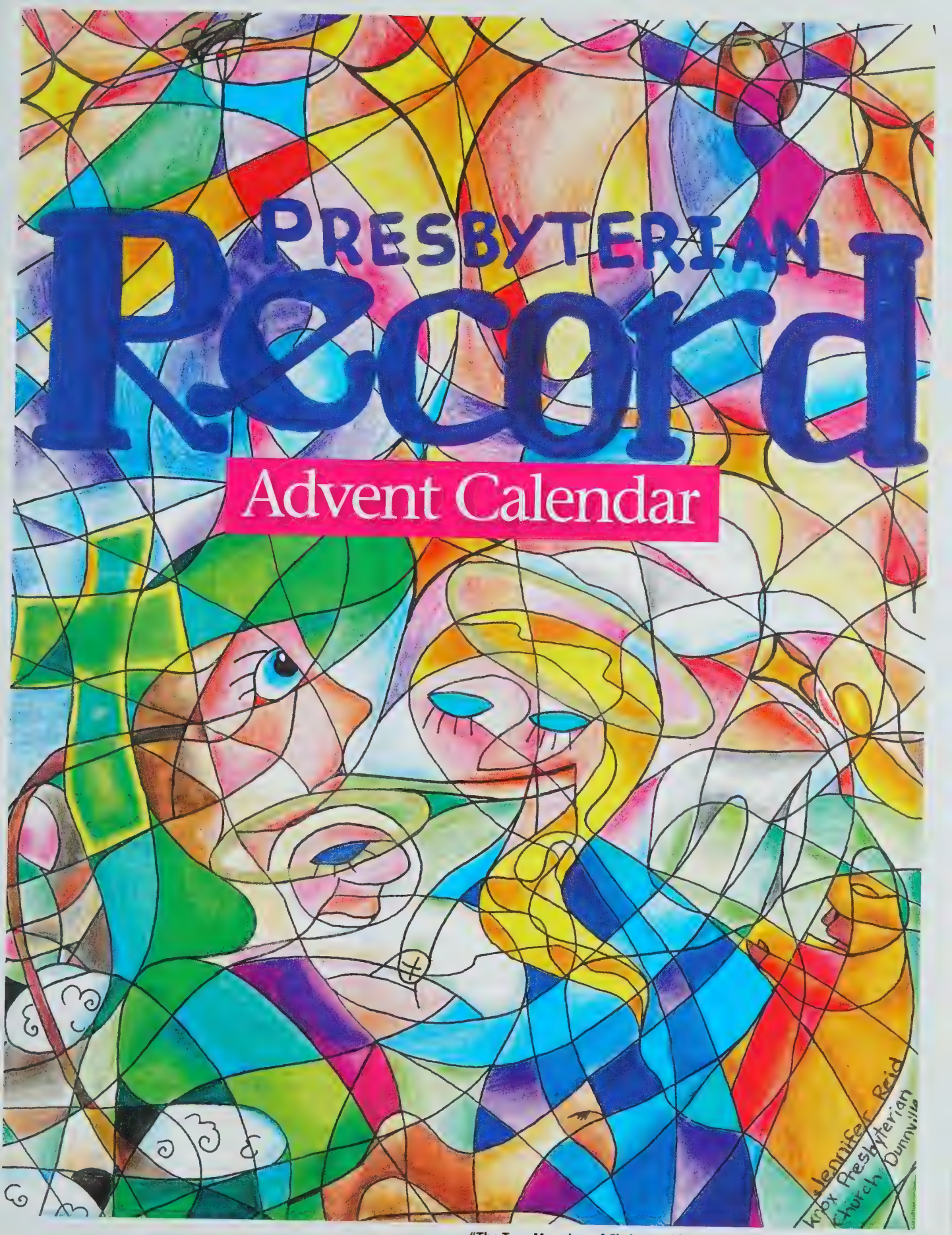
Bottom right on page 21 is an anniversary celebration: 40 leaves are used in the wreath to mark each of St. Paul's, Brampton's years.

The painstakingly detailed mosaic on page 34 is by Heather Bunting of London, Ont., who has been expanding her horizons as a Christian artist while being a mom.

The neo-Victorian image on page 20 is by Morgan Acker, age 15, of Harvey, N.B.

Any one of these artists could be a professional, and their submissions help brighten otherwise dreary October days at the office. Your entries give us a glimpse of how young Christians make sense of this thing called Christmas.

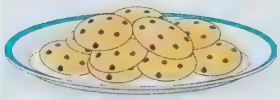
So many stories, so much talent, shared openly. The staff at the *Record* is humbled by the response. ■



"The True Meaning of Christmas" by Jennifer Reid, Knox, Dunnville, Ont.

Mission Possible

As an individual, a family or a group, youth or other, read and discuss each day's sc

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	We
DECEMBER 2007 2  1ST ADVENT SUNDAY **John 3:16** Focus your thoughts on mission. What is mission? How can you "do" "mission? Write your own definition individually or as a group.	3  **John 10:10b** Go through all your winter clothes: select scarves, mitts, jackets, hats to take to a local shelter or Out of the Cold program.	4  **John 6:48** Begin your Christmas baking. Plan enough to share with others: a shut-in, a soup kitchen … and so on.	 **John 8:12** As you get out decorations, pu longer need an shelter or Out c
9  **Isaiah 58:6** Pray for the Interfaith Committee on Chaplaincy for Correction Services Canada, which advises on spiritual care to inmates.	10 **Matthew 25:14-16, 20-21** As an individual or a group, decide on an amount of money i.e. $10, and determine to double or triple it by year's end for a mission project.	11  **Isaiah 65:21** Presbyterians help people build new homes through working with Habitat for Humanity. Contact Habitat to see what you can do in your area.	**Mark 4:37-39** Make a donatio funds are availa such as tsunam hurricanes and
16  **Psalm 146:5-10** Light a special candle for those who will spend this Christmas season in hospital, in exile, prison or refugee camps.	17  **Luke 6:22-23, 27** Amnesty International monitors instances of torture and human rights abuses around the world. Find examples of abuse in newspapers and pray about each one.	18  **Luke 10:33-37** Share something of what Christmas means to you–like Christmas cake, an ornament, cookies–with a neighbour and ask about their culture, traditions and beliefs.	 **Psalm 72:6** With help from matching grant the lead agency over five millio bulb to share w
23  **Matthew 1:23** In the remote Cariboo-Chilcotin region of B.C. Shannon and Jon Wyminga have a ministry of presence among the Nazk First Nations Reserve. Who can you be "present with" today?	24  **Luke 2:8-12** Many people are without shelter tonight, and on the city streets. Call Roger Hunter of PCC Boarding House Ministries and ask how you can help out at this Christmas season.	25  CHRISTMAS **Isaiah 9:6** As you celebrate the birth of the Prince of Peace, pray for peace in the world and in the hearts of people everywhere.	 **John 1:1** For excellent st publications su *Tidings* and *The* Subscribe now!
30  **Proverbs 13:23** Find a local soup kitchen to volunteer in or get involved with food bank work.	31  **Isaiah 58:7** In Malawi the PCC works with local partners to combat HIV/AIDS, improve agriculture and livelihood, and boost nutrition and health. Contribute to the PCC's "Towards A World Without AIDS".	**JANUARY 2008** 1  **Joel 2:28** Today, dream dreams for the future of humankind. Write a poem, prose or an encouraging letter to someone in need.	**Isaiah 65:17-2** Make a list of pr this year to mak and your city a l to live in.

Calendar

"You must be the change you want to see in the world."
- Mahatma Gandhi

ture, and decide on an action. BY L. JUNE STEVENSON

sday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
5 nas lights and those you no te them to a local old program.	6 **John 14:6** Learn about the PCC's Ministries with Aboriginal Peoples (see the February 2007 *Record*), and send a Christmas greeting to each ministry.	7 **James 2:14-18** Make plans to study a mission project in the New Year and order materials. The 2007-2008 PCC study on Guatemala is available from The Book Room.	8 **Matthew 10:42** PWS&D partners work to improve access to clean water in places like Malawi and Tanzania. Think about conserving water by turning off the taps while brushing your teeth.
12 WS&D so that natural disasters nquakes, ons.	13 **Matthew 24:6, 7** PWS&D provides food relief for isolated areas of Afghanistan. Look for news about Afghanistan in the newspaper and make a poster.	14 **Matthew 26:11-13** The most extravagant gift we can give each other is love. Make someone in your family a handmade gift or a "love" coupon that promises you will do something special for them.	15 **Luke 14:21b-23** Discuss plans for sharing a dinner at Christmas time with a stranger, a foreign student–someone who will be alone.
19 nembers and CIDA, PWS&D was ograms worth s. Plant a spring neone next year.	20 **Proverbs 2:6-9** Purchase Fair Trade coffee for your Christmas celebrations and tell your guests about it.	21 **Proverbs 1:2-7a** The PCC has many university chaplains. Say a special prayer for their work and for those students who are unable to make it home for Christmas.	22 **Matthew 25:34-36, 40** Do you know someone who is disabled, sick or shut-in? Phone them, or visit them with a gift or card.
26 mission read PCC ne *Record*, *Glad* *terian Message*.	27 **Proverbs 18:16a** For next year, order the catalogue *Gift of Change: Something Extra* from the PCC Book Room that will provide alternate gift suggestions to help spread the love and caring of Jesus Christ.	28 **Ephesians 4:11-12** Investigate twinning with another group. Examples: have your presbytery twin with a Han-Ca (Korean) Presbytery; or your congregation twin with a native congregation.	29 **Revelation 21:1-4** Help PWS&D call on Canada to stop cluster bombs. See the website for Mines Action Canada.
2 things you can do neighbourhood place for everyone	3 **John 6:27** Get ready to use the "talent money" you doubled or tripled. Study Something Extra Projects and choose one such as a gift of livestock to support.	4 **Matthew 28:18-19** Support the work of PCC International Ministries with volunteer teachers like Murray Garvin, in Yu Shan Theological College and Seminary in Taiwan.	5 EPIPHANY **Matthew 2:13-15** Jesus and his family were refugees. Pray for Glynis Williams, Action Réfugiés Montreal, in her work helping refugees find safety and support.

PRESBYTERIAN Record

Dear Friend,

What an incredible year it has been in the pages of the Presbyterian Record! Where else will you read about how Presbyterian youth are trying to wake up and shake up the church? Or see those heart-wrenching, yet dignified photographs of the destitute in India that the church is ministering to?

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PWS Developments

The official newsletter of
Presbyterian World Service & Development

December 2007 edition

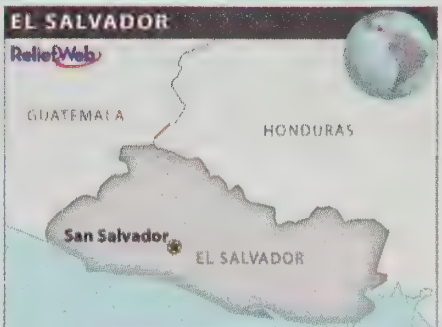
PWS&D is the development, relief and refugee agency of The Presbyterian Church in Canada

Voices of Women in El Salvador



Speaking out against discrimination and violence

Speak out for those who cannot speak,
for the rights of all the destitute.
Proverbs 31:8



"We have a miracle from God," says Amanda, a member of a women's group in El Salvador receiving support from PWS&D. "We have a voice and so many others don't."

The women that gather as part of a PWS&D supported program in El Salvador are motivated and passionate in their goal to change the way their society values women. Bit by bit, they are forging new attitudes and establishing their rights. They are mobilizing to fight corruption, poverty, crime and violence.

Supported by PWS&D, a program with the Institute for Women's Research, Training and Development (IMU) in El Salvador is changing the world families live in. The program forms women's study circles that help address poverty and malnutrition through health, education and income generating projects. The program covers any costs associated with the meetings, makes sure they have a safe place to gather, and reviews the needs of group members. Together they tackle a wide range of issues including learning how to defend their human rights, overcome domestic violence, and gain confidence. With a severe lack of government aid, the groups are an effective way to establish self-sufficiency and independence.

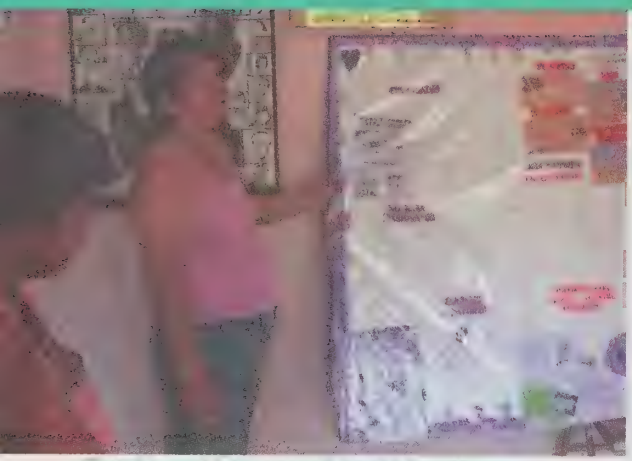
A key part of the women's groups supported by PWS&D and IMU is to revolutionize how women are treated and valued by society. For many women in El Salvador, a machismo culture treats them like second-class citizens. Often they are single parents, struggling to change attitudes in their children that the world around them reflects every day.

While results are slow to emerge, these women are not looking for a

"We are changing the future for our children."



New Voices in El Salvador



temporary fix to overcome poverty, discrimination and inequality, but they are part of a movement to change how women are treated in their country.

Gloria's Story

In the community of Suchitoto, over two hours outside the capital city of San Salvador, Gloria is the president of a women's group led by IMU of about 40 women. The women gather to address issues of poverty, health and education. They support each other to overcome domestic violence.

Gloria knows just how hard it can be. She grew up in a poor household with four siblings and her mother was the sole caretaker after her father left. Gloria enjoyed school and studying but was only able to complete grade four. In the hopes that marriage would offer her a new life and freedom from poverty, Gloria married at age fifteen. After a few years, Gloria began to wonder if her husband really loved her. She had seven children, they were living in poverty, and she was the victim of extreme domestic violence.

After 10 years, Gloria rejected her lifestyle and fought back by leaving, despite the social stigma. "It was as if I were dead," she said of those dark days. With the help of her mother, Gloria got land for a new home, where she now lives with her children, grandchildren and her mother. "I have realized my dream of having my own humble but dignified home," she says. And her home is a place where she now meets with other women in the community for the study circles, to talk about issues such as women's rights, family planning and mental health.

"It was as if I were dead."

The groups offered through IMU emphasize communication to break down barriers that individuals may face, and forge new attitudes. The women set a positive example for their children. The groups offer training in conflict resolution, gender issues, leadership, sexual education and economics. They teach members how to overcome violence, establish solidarity, share knowledge and engage the government. They offer training for a variety of skills such as hair styling, computers, sewing and health care.

The women's study circles are an effective and important way for women to work together to free themselves from violence and discrimination. "It's not about hating men," Gloria explains. "It's about valuing ourselves." And it's a way for women that have felt isolated from society to develop lasting friendships and change their futures.

The study circles believe in working as an association with members taking on roles such as president, vice-president, treasurer and secretary. Recognizing that each member has something to contribute, they learn from the success and failures of others. It is community-focussed living that has real results. "I have fewer problems in my marriage now," says Marana. Her husband has seen the positive affects that involvement in the group has had and his attitude toward his wife has changed.

Carmen is a group member who sits on the public defence committee of the association and has witnessed how the group can make a difference. Carmen regularly goes out to the community to raise awareness of their cause and speak on domestic





Women Speak Out

Participants of the women's study circles have a lot to say...

"I never felt I could speak in front of others, but now I can. Now I talk to others about how they can get help too."

"I've learned a lot about self-esteem."

"For 15 years I had my head down, but now I hold it high."

"The group requires a lot of sacrifice, but it's definitely worth it."

"We are working to fight violence against women. For a better future."

"We have a vision. We will keep working to make it happen."

"My vision is that we stay together to grow and prosper."

"One day I'd like us to make money and have a good salary with this and other initiatives."

"Some men say (us meeting together) is okay, as long as we still have dinner ready for them when they get home."

"I have faith that we can do it."

"With the help of God, we keep getting better at working together."

"It's never too late to learn."

"Dreams are good. But we can't live on dreams."

"This group is a foundation to help women."

"I found a place where I can develop myself."

"I have a right to an opinion."



violence, the consequences of actions and respect for others. She admits the talks weren't received very well at first. But her persistence and the importance of the topic has led others to see positive effects on the family unit, such as women contributing to family decisions, setting a positive example for children and mutual respect between husband and wife.

Another aspect of the IMU program is to provide small loans to the groups. The women decide on a project they want to embrace to help them earn money and improve their standard of living. Some groups have chosen to run a bakery. Others purchase livestock. Gloria's group decided to run a small store in their community. They received a loan of $2,000 that allowed them to construct a building, buy supplies and stock the shelves. The store opened in May 2007 and although business at the store takes away from valuable time at home, the women work in shifts, two at a time, sharing the work with each other to lighten the burden.

"It's important that we work together," says group member Lillian. "Together, we can achieve anything."

The women admit that it has not been easy. They already lead busy lives, raising their families, overcoming personal issues, earning an income, and combating the protests of others—including their husbands—who often think they are wasting their time. But over and over again the women all talk about how important the group is to them. They are part of a movement to give women a place in society. They are slowly breaking the chains of poverty that so many of them suffer under. They are members of a support group that respects the contributions of each individual. They are creating hope for themselves and others.

Some of the women trained have since gone on to run for municipal government offices or have formed official women's associations. Together, and with the support of PWS&D, women and men in El Salvador are working to bring about peace, justice and equality for all.



Learn More About PWS&D

Q: So what exactly is PWS&D?

A: Presbyterian World Service & Development is the official development, relief and refugee agency of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. The work of PWS&D includes emergency relief, long-term community development and refugee services for people in need around the world. PWS&D is also responsible for educating Canadian Presbyterians about global needs and issues. PWS&D works in the areas of education, income-generation, agriculture and health care. We have development partners around the world, and for emergency situations we respond as the need arises.

Q: How does PWS&D fit into the structure of The Presbyterian Church in Canada?

A: According to the Acts and Proceedings of General Assembly, the mandate of PWS&D is to act as the agency within The Presbyterian Church in Canada for undertaking development activities, disaster relief and education of congregations to worldwide needs (A&P, 1981). PWS&D is governed by an Executive Committee, consisting of ten Canadian members representing presbyterians from across the country. There are also two representatives from Southern partner organizations who have full voting privileges.



PWS&D does not receive any funds from *Presbyterians Sharing...* or the General Assembly budget. Contributions come directly from congregations, groups and individuals who decide to support the international development, relief and refugee work of our church.

Q: Does PWS&D receive funds from the Canadian government?

A: PWS&D receives some funding from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) of the federal government for specific long-term community development work and some emergency relief efforts. PWS&D also receives matching grants up to 4:1 for specific programs.

For further details and answers to other questions, visit our website at www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd.





For more information or to make a donation, contact:

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pwsd@presbyterian.ca

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Editor: Barb Simmons, PWS&D

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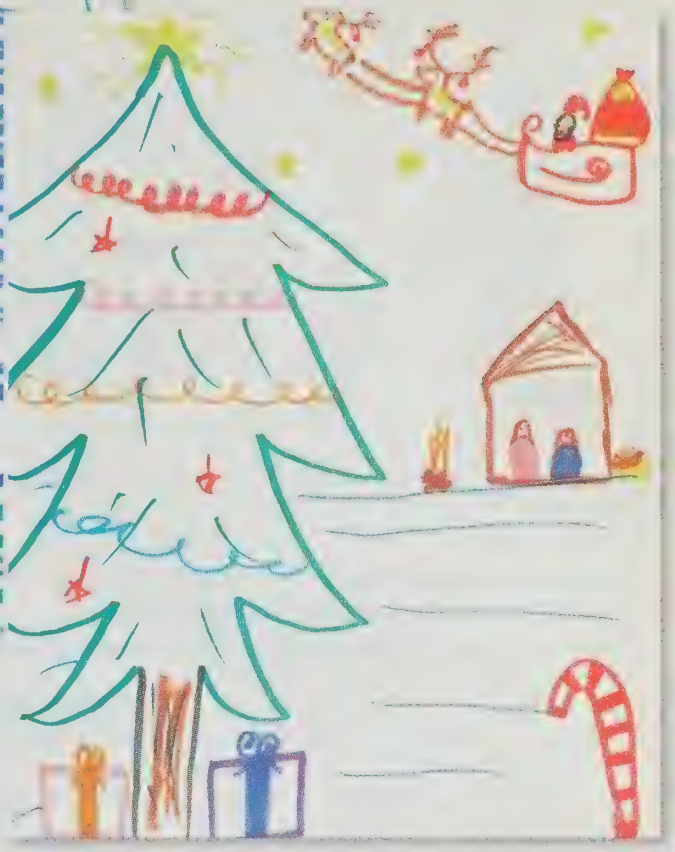
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PWS&D gratefully acknowledges all individuals and congregations who support the development, relief and refugee work of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.



Alexa Thomson-McWilliams, age 10, Knox, Oakville, Ont.



Julie Todaro, age 10, Knox, Oakville, Ont.

Some Awesome News

A Christmas play. BY MARK GEDCKE

Catherine Maul, age 7, Knox, Oakville, Ont.



MIRIAM: Shalom. Peace be with you. My name is Miriam, daughter of Benjamin and Sarah. I'm 13 years old. My parents are shepherds. I am their eldest child, and this is my brother—

MOSES: (interrupting) Hi. How's it goin'?

MIRIAM: This is my brother, Moses. He's 10.

MOSES: I'm almost 11.

MIRIAM: Well, anyway, we are glad to be with you. We have a story we wish to share with you.

MOSES: Yes, it's about the baby Jesus, and how we got to meet him on the day of his birth.

MIRIAM: Now wait a second, Moses. That's no way to tell the story. You're starting at the end, and giving away the special surprise.

MOSES: You folks are welcome to call me Mo! All my friends call me Mo.

MIRIAM: Will you stop that, Moses! We have a job to do!

MOSES: (aside) As you can see, my sister, Miry, calls ➤



Celina Hynes, age 7, St Andrew's, Alma, Ont.

There was like a whole choir of angels, just whaling away, and singing with all their hearts, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will among people." It was awesome!

me Moses.
MIRIAM: Don't call me Miry! My name is Miriam.
MOSES: Sure thing, Miry-um.
MIRIAM: (sighs) Go ahead and tell your part.
MOSES: I was just about to do that. (Under his breath.) Older sisters can be so bossy.
MIRIAM: I heard that.
MOSES: Good. Anyway, the day that we got to meet the baby Jesus started out like any other day. My dad shook me awake early that morning. We were going to look after the sheep. Dad looked tired, and I couldn't figure out why.
MIRIAM: It was because he and mother had argued the night before. You were snoring, so I couldn't sleep. I heard them talking. Father said he was tired of the whole sheep herding business—the long hours, the lack of respect. The price for sheep was lower than this time last year. Father wondered if we should sell everything and move to Jerusalem. He had heard there were lots of jobs there. But mother was not having any of this. She told him in that quiet voice she has when she's angry—
MOSES: (interrupting) Oh, that one! Last week, I was running outside to play with my friends, and I accidentally knocked over a cup, and it broke, and then mom—
MIRIAM: (interrupting) Yes, yes, Moses. We're all just so fascinated.
MOSES: Yadda, yadda, Miry.
MIRIAM: Stop calling me, Miry, Moses.
MOSES: The name is Mo.
MIRIAM: (To congregation.) The point is that mom and dad were at a stalemate. "We do things together in this family!" That's what they always say. So, they were stuck.
MOSES: Dad didn't look very happy that morning, when he shook me awake. We went out to the pen, and got the sheep out into the fields.
MIRIAM: I was with mom. We were making bread, and mom was pounding it hard with her fists. She pounded that dough for a long time ...
MOSES: Dad's mouth frowned, and his face had lines in it. I could tell he was upset. "Are you mad at me?" I asked. "No, little Mo," he said. "I'm just mad at life." In the afternoon, one of the sheep got sick, and blew up in size. It keeled over, and it was just lying there. I was sure it was going to die. Dad took his sharp stick and punctured the sheep. Out came a lot of guck. It was really neat—and then, before you knew it that sheep was up grazing with the others, as happy as could be.
MIRIAM: (reciting) "The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. The Lord makes me lie down in green pastures, leads me beside still waters, restores my soul, and leads me in right paths for the sake of the Lord's name. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff—they comfort me."
MOSES: Yeah. It was just like that.
MIRIAM: Go on with the story, Mo.
MOSES: It was a long day. I slept for a while in the afternoon, 'cause we were going to be watching the whole flock that night.
MIRIAM: Mom and I came with the bread, the meat, and the sheep milk for our evening meal.
MOSES: Boy, do I love sheep milk!
MIRIAM: We sat together near the fire, but mom and dad didn't speak to one another.
MOSES: Yeah. It was quiet. Too quiet. After the meal, I picked up my reed flute and started to play a tune that my dad loved. But dad said, "Will you stop that, Moses. I'm trying to think." I put down my flute, and I swallowed hard.
MIRIAM: I got mad. I said: "What's wrong with Mo playing the flute? I like to hear him." Dad said he was sorry, but that didn't break up the clouds. No one spoke. A bit later some other shepherds came to warm themselves at our fire. But they didn't say much either. Their faces looked sad. The evening was getting late, and Mo had lain down to go to asleep.
MOSES: I wasn't sleepy. I was star watching. The stars shone brightly that night, when all of a sudden—
MIRIAM: (completing the thought) My eyes were blinded by a light.
MOSES: I winced too.
MIRIAM: It was an angel.
MOSES: He was beautiful.
MIRIAM: You mean she was beautiful.
MOSES: Whatever. The angel spoke to us: "Be not afraid." Which made me feel better because I was shaking like a leaf.
MIRIAM: The angel told us that our Saviour had been born in Bethlehem. And she told us how we could find him: "You will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."
MOSES: And then there was like a whole choir of angels, just whaling away, and singing with all their hearts, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will among people." It was awesome!
MIRIAM: Mom and dad looked different.

They were crying, and they looked happy. They gave us hugs. And mom said we had to go and find this child. So we got up and we put the sheep in the pen as quick as we could. And then, together with some other shepherds, we went into Bethlehem. I thought it would be like finding a needle in a haystack ...

MOSES: But we all just knew where to go. We ran and found a stable behind an inn. And in the stable, there was a baby lying in a feed trough.

MIRIAM: The baby was tightly bound in strips of cloth. He was beautiful.

MOSES: His face was red, and kind of smushed.

MIRIAM: He was beautiful.

MOSES: Yeah, he was.

MIRIAM: I gave him my favourite doll.

MOSES: I played for him with my reed flute.

MIRIAM: His parents were so surprised to see us. At first, the man looked frightened, as if he thought his wife and baby might be in some danger. But when we told him our story, he smiled. Then he told us how they had travelled here from Nazareth. There was no room to be found, but luckily the innkeeper had allowed them to stay here. A lamp lit their faces. I remember their names: Joseph, Mary—

MOSES: And the baby, Jesus.

MIRIAM: Mary looked at us with clear, sure eyes. She was quiet, like mom. She looked like she was treasuring each moment. She was glad we had come.

MOSES: But soon we had to leave. The sheep needed us to be there to look after them.

MIRIAM: We went back to our home. And we were telling the news of what happened to the people we met along the way.

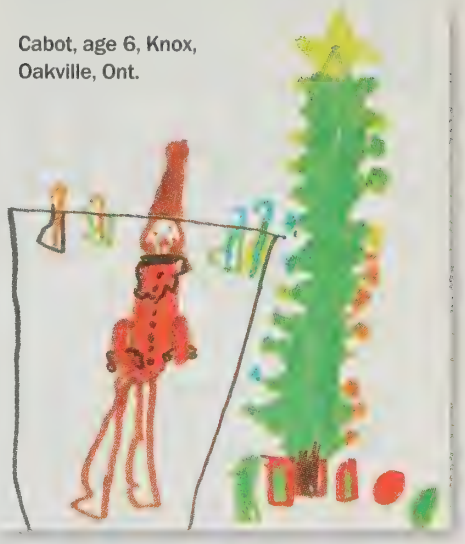
MOSES: It's a funny thing, isn't it?

MIRIAM: What's that, Mo?

MOSES: Well, we're still looking after the sheep. Mom and dad haven't talked about selling them, or moving to Jerusalem since that day.

MIRIAM: Yes, Mo. You're right. It is a most surprising thing. I wonder what will happen when that baby grows up?

MOSES: It'll be awesome, Miriam. I just know it's gonna be awesome. ■



Cabot, age 6, Knox, Oakville, Ont.

Rev. Mark Gedcke is minister at Calvin, Kitchener, Ont. Email him at: mgedcke@netflash.net



A Winter Birthday

There's a story to the story of Christmas. BY BARRY BALDWIN



Heather Bunting, age 32, London, Ont.

Matthew (2:1-16) and Luke (2:1-20), the Biblical nativity narrators, do not specify the date of Jesus' birth. Still, as Northrop Frye remarks in *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature*, "The Gospels are not biography." John (21:25) had already concluded, "And there are many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written."

The early church did not always take much interest. Origen (c.185-251), indeed, in his commentary on Matthew, deprecated birthday celebrations as pagan and immoral, fit only for the likes of Herod. Eusebius (*Church History*) was concerned to establish the correct nativity year, but ignored the question of the day. Happily, not all contemporary Christian scholars agreed. Clement of Alexandria came up with May 10. Other spring suggestions included April 2 or 19, and May 20. The anonymous treatise *De Pascha Computus* (AD 243, once falsely credited to Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage) argued for March 28, a bold synthesis of the vernal equinox, the Creation, and Malachai's prophecy (4:2) of the Sun of Righteousness.

The first advocate of December 25 was Sextus Julius Africanus in his *Chronicle* entry for the year 221. This was both a compliment and a challenge to the Roman Saturnalia festival of that season. Africanus, born in Jerusalem, was an expert in comparative chronologies and world history. We know from the *Calendar of Philocalus* (a list of bishops, compiled around 354) that this date was established in Rome by 336, about the time Constantine, the first Christian emperor, built the Church of the Holy Nativity in Bethlehem. In 354, Pope Liberius ordered that December 25 be celebrated. Gregory Nazianzenus imported this to Constantinople in 379, thus harmonizing the New Rome with the old. Likewise, in his Nativity sermon of 386, John Chrysostom introduced it into Antioch, while elsewhere Gregory of Nyssa was promoting it in his Nativity sermon preached on the very same day. Egypt fell into line in 431, Jerusalem in 549. Its strongest rival, January 6 (conflating Nativity with Epiphany) was slow to yield in Syria, and still holds good in the Armenian Church.

Modern sceptics, both academic and amateur Internet bloggers, decry

Luke's account of the watching shepherds. They would not be out in the winter cold, it was not lambing time, the sheep would be in their cotes. A better question is: where did Luke (Matthew does not have it) get this story? It is artistically well crafted. His Greek for "watching shepherds" (*poimenes agraulountes*—this verb only here in the New Testament) reflects knowledge of *poimenes agrauloi* in Homer (*Iliad*) and (more to the point) Hesiod, *Birth of the Gods*, where the Muses appear to the poet. But, Luke does not mention lambs. The shepherds were simply "guarding their flocks," conceivably against wild animals or rustlers, two common menaces. Also,

Modern sceptics, both academic and amateur Internet bloggers, decry Luke's account of the watching shepherds

lambing is not confined to the spring. Sheep give birth in any season—I well remember this from my Northern English upbringing. Various Internet sites quote professional ovine scientists for the nutritional advantages of keeping grazing animals outside, which releases the shepherds from the unpleasant and time-consuming task of cleaning out the cotes.

Hence, this lam(b)entable modernism is no bar to a winter birthday for the "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world" (John 1:29).

Modern skeptics also debunk the very different nativities of Matthew (2:1-16) and Luke (2:1-20). No cause for alarm. Both represent their very personal impressions of Jesus. It is notable that it should be Matthew, if his really was the first Gospel, and Luke, the first Christian to write in terms of classical historiography, witnessed by his preface and similar opening to Acts. Between them, Matthew's Oriental slant and Luke's Roman one create complementary, not rival, traditions, similar to the Aeneas-Trojan/Romulus-Italian dichotomy for Rome's foundation. The physician Luke was naturally drawn to a pregnant woman in difficulties and an extraordinary birth. But why no fiscal details in Matthew, a former tax-collector? Perhaps to forget when he was one of the "publicans and sinners."

Mary and Joseph naturally wished Christ to be born in Bethlehem, as prophesied by Micah (5:2) and emphasized by Eusebius (1:8). Matthew says only that it was the place of birth, quite compatible with Luke. Modern preferences for Nazareth over Bethlehem rest on misunderstandings of Mark 1:9 and John 7:41, texts representing contemporary debates over the Messiah Christ's Galilaean versus Davidian credentials.

The Magi were seers. Their regal Christmas carol status comes via Tertullian's dubbing them "almost kings" (*fere reges*). They had traditional genealogical expertise and influence over Eastern monarchs. If Matthew (in one tradition) died in Persia, he would have local interest and knowledge. It makes sense that Herod would use them as spies: en route to Bethlehem, they would be less feared there than his own men. Their failure to return showed their news would not be to his liking, hence the Massacre of the Innocents.

Herod the Great (d. 4 BC) might be chronologically awkward. But there is son and successor Herod Antipas available—nothing to choose between them in villainy.

A guiding star suited the prophetic Numbers 24:17. Heavenly bodies are frequent in ancient history, secular and religious. A comet, perhaps Halley's, attended the murder and funeral of Julius Caesar. Byzantine chronicler John Malalas reported the 20-day stay of a Western one. Over the last few years (see the computer program *Skyglobe*), astronomers have suggested convergences of Jupiter and Mars/ Jupiter and Venus/ Jupiter and Saturn, causing ➤

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Northern Lights intensification, as the source of the Nativity Star. And the DO aquilae star reported by Chinese observers as newly shining for 70 days in 5 BC gives reason for another candidate for the Nativity year. Bethlehem was five miles south of Jerusalem, any distance was long in ancient travel, the Magi needed guidance in a strange land, and Matthew's Greek text need only mean it illuminated the right town, not the right building.

"There went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed." This King James' translation misleads: the Greek *apographesthai* strictly means to be registered as eligible for taxation and other things. Augustus' official autobiography mentions three censuses (28 BC, 8 BC, AD 14). Others are possible, to fit a particular circumstance such as the annexation of Judaea in AD 6. His scantily documented reign means no modern can be sure who was doing what, where, when.

"This taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria." Northrop Frye ("Such historical pointers are more embarrassing than helpful") and others solve the detail by disregarding it. Luke is notably punctilious with his Roman administrative details (witness his intricate next chapter on John the Baptist) and, if as widely thought, he came from Syria, he would have been especially interested in this matter.

The DO aquilae star reported by Chinese observers as newly shining for 70 days in 5 BC gives reason for another candidate for the Nativity year

Cyrenius is generally identified with Publius Sulpicius Qurinius, known from Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities* and an inscription to have been in charge of Judaea's annexation in AD 6. Thanks to military victories in Cyrene, he was eligible in characteristic Roman style to add Cyrenius to his three regular names.

Malalas—as is generally ignored—mentions a consul of 2 BC called Cyrenius, adding that the "irascible" Augustus's census caused great fear; Josephus says it provoked a major anti-Roman uprising led by Judas of Galilee, not formally part of the new Judaea but still answerable to Rome. The census itself might have introduced new rules for this enumeration of the newly-annexed and (viewed from Rome) refractory population. Making the inhabitants do the travelling, whatever the season, would be administratively convenient and Romanly symbolic. As Disraeli remarked of a similar British imperial moment, "In my day these people came to me." ■

Barry Baldwin is professor emirtus of classics at the University of Calgary.



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Families Like Ours

God sent His Son to the messiest of places, invading us with hope. BY PHIL CALLAWAY



Alexa Leiningem, Knox, Oakville, Ont.

Each year I receive lengthy Christmas letters from former friends of mine and it is a little annoying to hear just how very well their lives are proceeding. Here's one example:

Merry Christmas dear friend,

It's been such a great year! Little Joseph (age 10) continues to excel in his studies in 11th grade. It was slow going that first day in Biophysics but he's pulled up his socks enough to be grading papers for his favorite teacher. Joy (8) was voted Female Athlete of the Year in three separate sports (basketball, tennis and skeet-shooting) and won both the fly-fishing derby and the pie bake-off for the second year running. Jonathan (6) is on the honour roll again, but has struggled a little with Spanish because he finds it similar to Portuguese, which he mastered last year. He enjoys leading the discipleship group and volunteering at the Seniors' Centre. After my promotion, we decided to spend a month in the Caribbean where we adopted the twins (Juanita and Jose). My lovely wife June is tireless. She home-schools the kids, serves as a mid-wife (58 births this year) and has written her second dieting book. My job at the bank is certainly challenging, but difficulty squeezes the best from us all, doesn't it?

Signed, Jerry (Joyful in Moose Jaw)

Jonathan (6) is on the honour roll again, but has struggled a little with Spanish because he finds it similar to Portuguese

If I were to postpone my procrastinating long enough to write a Christmas letter this year, it wouldn't look anything like Jerry's. In fact, it might arrive looking something like this:

Warm Greetings from the Callaways,

I was hoping to tell you of our wonderful year. Then January arrived. In hindsight, the New Year's Day explosion (a simple mix-up involving household chemicals like paint and bleach) should have foreshadowed things to come. On Valentine's Day the basement sewer backed up. Apparently Jeffrey had spent years wondering what would ➤



Will, age 8, Knox, Oakville, Ont.

happen if he flushed a beach towel. March saw one of us total the fender on the Ford three days before the engine light came on for good. Next up came those mid-semester report cards warning us that another child had made the horror roll. May began with word of the tax audit (I accidentally added an extra zero to a cheque we wrote to our church), and in June the flooding began. It's been quite a year. Three of my friends moved away and another experienced a massive heart attack. My mother broke both hips in the space of two months, and on Canada Day my dear father succumbed to Alzheimer's-related pneumonia. Three days after his funeral we buried Ramona's eldest brother. After a 20-year battle with Huntington's disease, Dennis will be Home for Christmas. *The Callaways.*

You get the idea. A Christmas epistle from the Callaways would hardly be welcome reading while roasting chestnuts on an open fire. If joy is a barometer that mirrors our circumstances, we've had an awful year. But we haven't.

Jeffrey left the front door open while we were decorating the Christmas tree—trying to heat the great outdoors I suppose—and I yelled, "Were you born in a barn?" He poked his head around the corner and laughed. "Jesus was," he said. And he was right. God sent His Son into the world for families like ours, families where the unexpected and the tragic infiltrate daily living, where questions don't find ready answers and parenting can be exhilarating and exasperating, all in the space of six seconds. He came to the messiest of places, invading our brokenness with hope.

But Christmas was always about relationships. As Dad liked to say, "It's not our birthday we're celebrating now is it, Son?"

This Christmas will mark the first time that I will open presents without my father watching from a nearby sofa. Through the years he gave me some wonderful gifts. Skates. A Maple Leafs jersey. And more recently a light blue sweater that I haven't had the nerve to wear publicly or the heart to throw away. But Christmas was never about stuff. It was about relationships. As Dad liked to say, "It's not our birthday we're celebrating now is it, Son?" ■

Looking for a Christmas gift they'll keep on opening? Purchase an autographed copy of one of Phil's books at www.phil-callaway.com

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Eyes Opened to the Wonder

Only those who need to see it, can see the miracle.

BY LAURENCE DEWOLFE



Naomi Auld, age 8, St. Andrew's, Alma, Ont.

Lectionary reading for Christmas Eve: Luke 2:1-20

The Christmas story doesn't begin with God. It begins with Caesar and his servants. It doesn't begin with hope. It begins with the sad truth of oppression. It begins with Joseph, a Galilean labourer. Poorer than a peasant who worked on the land. Forced to make a long and costly journey south, so all Caesar's world could be taxed. And, by the way, his fiancée Mary went with him. By the way, she was pregnant. And, because of Caesar's demand, there was no room in town for two such as them. So the baby arrived in a stable.

A stable. A slum tenement. A garbage dump. The back seat of a taxi. The back room of a tavern. The dark corner of a tin-roofed African clinic full of people with AIDS. We get the picture. Or do we?

We don't know where he was born. The byre behind an inn? A cave outside the town? The dugout manger in the floor of a house that family and livestock share at night? Before we can place the manger, we're in a field. With shepherds! Scum of Palestine's rocky earth. They get the first words of hope. The first word of God. Do we get the picture?

John Calvin did. About Luke 2 he wrote: "Christ is revealed only to a few witnesses, and that at dead of night. Further, while God had at hand many of rank and high ability as witnesses, He puts them aside and simply chooses shepherds, of little account with men, of no reckoning ... If we desire to come to Christ, we must not be ashamed to follow those whom God chose, from the sheep dung, to bring down the pride of the world."

To bring down the pride of the world! No one was as proud as Caesar! Two of his chosen titles were "Christ" and "Lord." Proclaimed as Saviour, he had the power of grace and favour. By his goodwill the empire prospered. Caesar guaranteed the peace of the world. Anyone who said otherwise was punished. Anyone who claimed power like his was as good as dead. And an angel army (yes, that's what "host" means!) brought news to people with manure on their feet. Do we get it now?

Born marked for death, if what the angels shouted was true. (Yes, shouted!

Christ is revealed only to a few witnesses, and that at dead of night

No Handel chorus! A bold proclamation!) A Saviour. Who is Christ, the Lord. Whose advent brings grace and favour to all, in God's good will. My Lord, what a morning! Are the stars about to fall? Can we see it?

Helmut Thielicke (*Being a Christian When the Chips are Down*) told about a picture he kept in view of his desk around Christmas. A photograph of a group of young men in white robes. Some stand, visibly nervous, holding candles. Others kneel, in fear feigned or real, looking up. Shepherds and angels from a Christmas play. When church members came to his study, they always commented on the picture. Thielicke would ask them to guess the setting. A church with a drama program? A Bible college? No one got it right. Thielicke enjoyed correcting his parishioners' assumptions. The men weren't Bible college students. The scene was the chapel of a prison where Thielicke made pastoral visits. Some of the men were convicted murderers. One spoke the same line every Christmas, as he knelt at the manger, "I lay in fetters groaning. You came to set me free." Thielicke said the picture recorded a miracle. Do we see it?

The miracle isn't the virgin birth. Or even a safe birth in a rough place, in a time of high infant mortality. It may be a miracle but only those who know they need one can see it.

At Christmas the world we know is a pretty good place. The worlds we create inside our homes and churches are warm and safe. Warmer, safer than Jesus' first nursery. Or the shepherds' field. Or a prison cell. Or a clinic in Africa. Anywhere in the world Jesus knew. Do we see that?

Maybe we need our own miracle at the manger. Eyes opened to see the wonder of God's plan to bring down the prideful powers of the world. Hearts opened to admit our poverty, our need. Then courage to rise and live the world-changing gospel. ■

Rev. Laurence DeWolfe is minister at St. David's, Halifax.



Shirley Moulton, St. Stephen's, Ottawa

Two Children for a Sign

Immanuel or Quick Pickings.

BY CALVIN BROWN

As we enter the season of Advent and Christmas often we hear, read (or sing in Handel's *Messiah*) Isaiah's passage about the child born to a virgin. He is Immanuel and the promise is that at some point in the future this supernaturally born child will become ruler of the people in the kingdom of God. The passages in chapters seven and nine can hardly be read without our hearts soaring in expectation and hope. For to us a child is born and to us a son is given ... and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end ... the zeal of the house of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

The leaders didn't really want this sign but God said He would give it anyway and they needed to deal with it. There are still many today who would just as soon God had chosen another sign but the choice isn't ours and we still need to deal with it.

Right in the middle of the first mention of this controversial son of a virgin, whose name is Immanuel, and who will be a sign of hope to the people, is the promise of another child. A child of a prophetess who is not named Immanuel (God with us) but has the threatening name of Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz. The translation of the name is Quick Pickings—easy prey. He forecast the coming devastation on Judah. The problem was that the people and the leaders weren't living with lives focused on God. They were tinkering with other loyalties. In the image of the prophet they were not enjoying the calm waters of God—symbolized by the waters ➤ continued on page 42

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of Shiloh that flow softly—so now they would experience the strong and wild waters of the king of Assyria. They envied this man created of glory and so now they experience the flood waters of that glory that has invaded their land and nearly drowned them. The water comes up to their necks!

Today there are many in a similar situation; they know God has promised Emmanuel but they experience more readily Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz. They feel the overwhelming situation that is threatening to drown them—whether it is financial pressure, broken relationships, or outside forces that overwhelm them. Somehow, like God's people of old, we know in part this has come on us because we haven't been content to rest in His peace and go with the flow of His will. We've tried to make things happen ourselves and the stress on our lives has become overwhelming. It is time now, to once again, look beyond the immediate to what is promised in the future. Though we are up to our necks in water we aren't doomed. We are called to remember that even in this situation God has given us the sign of Immanuel—the sign that He will be with us and with Him times will get better. This is not the easy answer or some glib self confidence that 'things will work out somehow,' rather it is a call to repentance. A call to make a choice about whether we are going to let our lives go on being pillaged—Quick Pickings—easy prey, or whether we are going to look to Immanuel—God with us—and learn again to place our hope in Him and follow along the quiet waters where he leads.

It's Advent, the time when we are to remember and prepare for Christ's coming and maybe it's time to think about two children that God gives as signs to His people so we'll be ready when He comes.

Happy Advent; Joyful Christmas! ■

Calvin Brown is Executive Director of the Renewal Fellowship within the PCC.



Franceska, age 11, Westminster, Paisley, Ont.

The Most Wonderful of Births

Simple is best for Christmas story. BY AMY MACLACHLAN

Many reviewers complained *The Nativity Story* was too safe and the story too simple, but that's what makes me like it so. While not an edge-of-your-seat nail-biter, (and thankfully avoiding overt brutality during the slaughter of the innocents) the quiet, relaxed atmosphere and overall tranquil pace helped create for me a world in which people were simply living and living simply, waiting for a gift that would change their lives, but working hard and praying faithfully until that day arrived.

Released last December and now available on DVD, the movie follows the life of Mary and Joseph in the year leading up to that most wonderful of births. Director Catherine Hardwicke has crafted a film that is tender, subtle and visually stirring, succeeding in portraying the normalcy of life that was forever altered when an angel appeared to Mary. For me, when Mary asks Eliza



Lauren, age 7, Westminster, Paisley



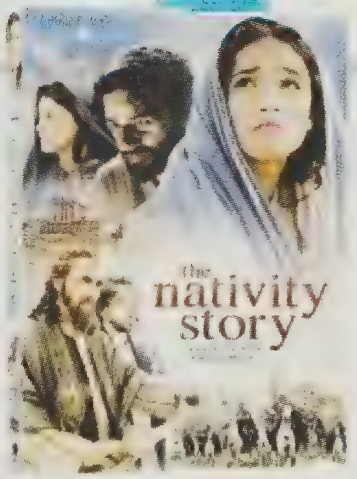
Faith, age 8, Westminster, Paisley

beth why God chose her, saying, "I am nothing," the point of the film was spoken, emphasizing the "nobody" that Mary was, along with the village from whence she came, the way God chose to enter this world, and the lesson that Jesus taught again and again. Bearing that in mind, I am further struck by the great faith that young Mary displayed when she submitted herself to God's will.

Keisha Castle-Hughes, who some might recognize from *Star Wars: Revenge of the Sith*, is mesmerizing—her plain looks, small voice, and meek demeanour are offset by passionate eyes, combining to create a character who draws you in, portraying the quiet humility yet unwavering spirit and strength that Mary surely possessed.

Castle-Hughes' performance is bolstered by Oscar Isaac who plays the honourable Joseph, Shohreh Aghdashloo as a joy-filled and faithful Elizabeth, and Ciarán Hinds whose King Herod is cold and perfectly paranoid. The trio of Magi who explain the significance of three stars that will come together and appear to align for the first time in 3,000 years on the night Jesus is born, provides comic relief—which at times seems slightly stilted, but is generally enjoyable. The one complaint is while the characters appeared authentic in their ethnicity, baby Jesus still managed to be white.

I'm not a religion scholar; nor am I a theology or history student. I can't tell you how accurate this film actually is—how the director got things right or wrong, how long it actually took to travel the 100 miles from Nazareth to Jerusalem on foot, if tween-aged Israelites would have played and laughed and goofed around with members of the opposite sex, if marriages in Nazareth happened with as little fanfare as my garbage pick-up on Tuesday mornings. But it does capture the unrest among the Israelites as they toiled under Herod's reign, the lifestyle and living conditions of the village where Jesus was born and grew up, relationship dynamics, and the hope of a people as they awaited their Saviour. The inspiring shots of



the Judean hills, the crowded, bustling streets of Jerusalem, the gravel roads, stone houses and dirt floors of Nazareth, the vastness of the desert, and the mighty beauty of the temple all helped bring the story to life.

A great addition to Sunday schools, church libraries, and maybe even your personal DVD collection to be pulled out each Christmas, *The Nativity Story* shows us what life might have been like for Jesus' parents, and how his arrival changed their lives forever. ■

Amy MacLachlan is the staff reporter for the Record.

The Christmas T-Shirt

A powerful message, simply told. BY DAVID WEBBER

Just before Christmas, as executor of my late father's will, I started the process of making application for compensation benefits for armed services veterans who were used as human guinea pigs in a top-secret chemical warfare testing program. The program went on in this country from 1941until the 1970s at two locations. As a soldier, Dad was used as a human guinea pig several times at Suffield, Alta., during the Second World War. Acknowledgement of the top-secret program was forced on our government after a class action lawsuit by victims seeking redress for illness related to the testing. Dad died in 2000 after a tragic battle with ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease. It was the last of many diseases that plagued him, particularly in the last 15 years of his life. (Were they a result of the chemical testing? We will never know. In the legal world you have to surrender a lot in order to win.)

To make application for the compensation benefits for his estate, I had to find the appropriate documentation, which meant rummaging through all of Dad's personal papers, pictures and stuff again. Almost immediately, the rummaging cannonballed me into a sea of grief, which I thought I had puddled in quite long enough in the months following his death. I had to make a decision, and quick. I had to go through with the application process but I did not have to go through with the deep grief again. And so, I just decided not to go there. I decided to cut myself off emotionally.



Fraser Morton, age 9, Glencoe, Ont.

A few days after my estate decision, I started to work on a Christmas sermon from Luke 2:1-20. After a full day's study and work I had absolutely nothing to show for it. Wednesday I spent the whole day again, and again nothing to show for it. Thursday was even worse and I was whining. Finally Linda grabbed me by the ear late in the afternoon and said, "Enough already! Do something else." I finished off the evening writing letters.

Friday morning early, Linda kicked me out of the house. I spent most of the morning parked on the frozen shores of Maze Lake reading and rereading the Luke passage in my pocket "field" Bible and asking God, "How come no sermon?" God wasn't talking. Christmas Eve came and I thought the Christmas Eve service would kick off a Christmas sermon for sure. Christmas Eve came and went, and Christmas Day dawned. I still didn't have even the beginning of a sermon. We opened gifts.

And then it happened. Jody from Sheridan Lake had given us each a little something for Christmas and as I opened mine, I discovered a rather innocent looking T-shirt with some writing on it. I love T-shirts, especially those with place names stencilled on them, so I picked it up to have a closer look at the place name. What I found was a picture of a cross, fashioned out of old weathered fencing boards. There was a note tacked to the old fence board cross that read: "Gone to see Dad. We're fixing a place for you. Be back soon to pick you up! Jesus."

I lost it. Pent-up emotion flooded in on me and I have to confess the rest of the morning was a blur. My mind and my heart were blown away by the simple message on the T-shirt. Later in the day as I reflected on the T-shirt sermon, the experience leading up to it and the Scriptures, I realized that the emotional detachment that I opted for as my "grief strategy" had had an effect on me that I was not counting on. Somehow I had castrated my emotional being, not just from re-grieving, but also from Christmas and the Scriptures. As a

result, the power of the Scripture, perhaps the most powerful part of Scripture, the part dealing with the birth of God in human flesh, had become inert for me and me for it. I have always known that for me, if Scripture doesn't first touch me deeply and emotionally, I don't have much to say about it. But never have I experienced this like I did this Christmas.

And so after lunch on Christmas day, I sat down once again with the Christmas Scripture from Luke. Now the pages seemed alive.

My mind and my heart were blown away by the simple message on the T-shirt

What especially stood out for me was Mary. What can you say about her? Twentieth-century German-Swiss reformed theologian Karl Barth liked to refer to her with the phrase first coined at the Council of Ephesus in AD 431: "Mother of God according to the manhood" of Jesus. Barth's point was that with the Holy Spirit coming upon the Virgin Mary, Mary is the real mother of God and Jesus is the real Emmanuel. That, Mary as mother of God, "God with us," is no longer some abstract theological notion nor a case of distant speculation. With the birth of Jesus, born of God, born of Mary, God pushes right into our face and speaks: "See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands" (Isaiah 49:16).

Powerful stuff. And it points to Mary's response to the shepherds. After they tell her all about the divine angelic pronouncement about the birth of her son, after they tell her all the theological content of what the angel told them, after they tell her all about the loud praise of the heavenly hosts which they witnessed ... to all this information Mary says absolutely nothing. Instead she quietly takes it to her heart. Eugene Peterson translates: "Mary kept all these things to herself, holding them dear, deep within herself." And what blows me away is how much this quiet, contemplative and very emotional response of a mother to the birth of the Son of God from her own human flesh is just the right personal response. Rather than saying anything, certainly rather than theologizing and preaching, Mary takes the powerful experience of the very real personal love of God and the truth of the birth of God in human flesh and plants it deep within her emotional centre to be treasured, pondered, held dear.

It seems to me that whatever else the birth of Jesus the Christ is, it is an invitation from God to enter into a deep and dear and love-filled heart-to-heart. It seems to me that when you boil off all the theology and preaching, when you go beyond all the religious stuff about it, what you get to through the birth of Christ is the inner life with God, a very emotional connection with the divine. The birth of God among us becomes the birth of God within us. As Jesus himself put it: "I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you" (John 14:20).

Is Christmas an emotional time of year? You bet! And for the Christian it has to be. I think the most powerful human testimony of this in Scripture is in Mary's quiet response to the birth of Jesus, treasuring and pondering it inwardly. Diaries or journals are often where the emotional inner life with God gets written about. Mary never wrote a diary that we know about. Others have. The diary of Thomas a Kempis, a member of the Brethren of the Common Life in the Netherlands in the late 1300s, has become treasured as The Imitation of Christ. It has remained one of the most widely read books in the world. Out of his own deep inner life with Christ and that of his brothers, he writes this prayer to God: "Raise my heart to You in heaven and suffer me not to wander on earth. From this moment to all eternity do You alone grow sweet to me, for You alone are my food and drink, my love and my joy, my sweetness and my total good. Let Your presence wholly inflame me, consume and transform me into Yourself, that I may become one spirit with You by the grace of inward union and by the melting power of Your ardent love." ■

David Webber is a contributing editor to the Record. *He is an ordained missionary working in our church's rural mission in the Cariboo-Chilcotin region of B.C. He has published three books, available from the WMS book room.*

Briarwood Presbyterian Church

Situated in the suburban community of Beaconsfield at the west end of Montreal Island. Excellent schools and extensive local activities but only 20 kilometres from the universities and downtown.

Having enjoyed strong ministry and continuous growth in faith and service, and in membership and stewardship, we are looking for the right minister to lead us further.

Briarwood is a congregation of about 130 families, of all age groupings and a wide range of talents. In a warm and renovated building, we gather in a sanctuary that seats 250 in an intimate horseshoe pattern for weekly intergenerational worship. We have a strong church school, a pastoral support team, an active music ministry and outreach programmes.

We are accustomed to great preaching and are looking for a minister with strong people and pastoral skills and lots of energy to lead us further.

Please contact our Interim Moderator,
Rev. Dr John Vissers,
Presbyterian College,
3495 University,
Montreal H3A 2A8
Phone 514 288 5256 ex 201
jvissers@presbyteriancollege.ca



Called to Wonder

Are You waiting for Christmas?

CREATED BY ERIN WALTON

Now that it is December, most people are thinking of Christmas! Everywhere we look we see signs of Christmas–especially at the mall! But it is actually not the Christmas Season yet.

We are in the season of waiting for Christmas. This special season is called "Advent", which means coming or arrival. If you think waiting for Christmas is hard, imagine how the Israelites felt waiting 500 years for the birth of Jesus–talk about patience!!!

The season of Advent starts on the fourth Sunday before Christmas and ends on Christmas Eve. This year, Advent is Dec. 2 to Dec. 24.

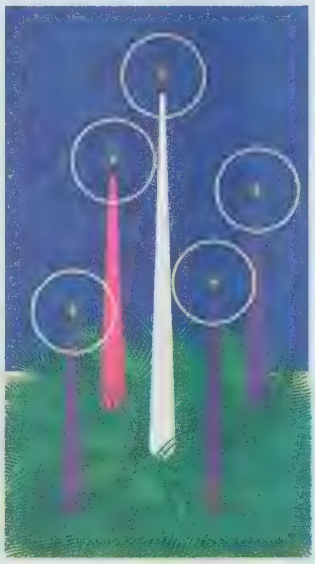
Special things YOU can do this Advent season...

1. **MAKE A JESSE TREE** JUST GOOGLE " MAKING A JESSE TREE" AND TONS OF RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE FREE OF CHARGE.

2. **VOLUNTEER** TO BE AN ADVENT LITANY READER AT YOUR CHURCH.

3. **KEEP AN ADVENT CALENDAR** AT HOME TO OPEN DAILY WITH YOUR FAMILY.

The Advent Wreath



You may have noticed an Advent Wreath has appeared in your church. The circle of the wreath reminds us of God Himself; his eternity and endless mercy which has no beginning or end. The candles each represent something Jesus would bring into the world with his birth. Unscramble the following words to reveal each of the candles we light on the advent wreath during this season:

PEOH _____

ACPEE _____

OYJ _____

LVOE _____

RISHCT _____

The location of the Christ candle reminds us that the incarnation of Christ is the heart of the season, giving light to the world. The light of the candles reminds us that Jesus is the light of the world that comes into the darkness of our lives.

Ministry Opportunities and Interim Moderators

Synod of the Atlantic Provinces

Bass River, N.B., Bass River Pastoral Charge; Rev. Kent Burdett, 101 Dutch Point Rd., Hampton, NB E5N 5Z2; 506-832-4985; kburdett@nbnet.nb.ca.

Sunny Corner Pastoral Charge, N.B., St. Stephen's, Sunny Corner, St. Paul's, Warwick; Rev. H. Martyn Van Essen, 7 Hierlihy Rd., Tabusintac, NB E9H 1Y5; 506-779-1812; hmvanessen@hotmail.com.

Synod of Quebec and Eastern Ontario

Gatineau (Aylmer), Que., St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church; Rev. Gregory Davidson, c/o St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 82 Kent St., Ottawa, ON K1P 5N9; 613-232-9042; gd@standrewsottawa.ca.

Gloucester (Ottawa), Ont., Gloucester Presbyterian Church; Half-time minister; Interim Moderator Dr. Daniel MacKinnon, 1220 Old Tenth Line Rd., Orleans, ON K1E 3W7; 613-824-9260; pastordan@graceorleans.ca.

Lachute, Que., Margaret Rodger Memorial Presbyterian Church; Rev. Dr. Bill Klempa, 155 Lake Louisa Rd. N., Wentworth, QC J8H 0C5; 450-533-5321; wklemp@po-box.mcgill.ca.

Morrisburg, Ont., Knox; Dunbar, Ont., Dunbar; Rev. P. E. M. Chambers, PO Box 1513, Kemptville, ON K0G 1J0; 613-258-6654; perlcham@sympatico.ca.

Pincourt, Que., Ile Perrot; Mark Farrell, Convener, Search Committee, 242 Fifth Ave., Pincourt, QC J7V 5L3; 514-453-4796; markim@ca.inter.net.

Synod of Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda

Englehart, St. Paul's; Tomstown, Ont., Tomstown; St. Paul's and Tomstown Pastoral Charge, approximately 10 km from Tomstown; Full-time minister; Interim Moderator Rev. Janice Hamalainen, PO Box 908, New Liskeard, ON P0J 1P0; 705-647-8401; jhamalainen@parolink.net.

Madoc, Ont., St. Peter's Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator, c/o St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 110 Mill St., PO Box 118, Stirling, ON K0K 3E0; 613-395-5006; katherinejonah@hotmail.com.

Markham, Ont., St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Don Muir, 50 Wynford Dr., Toronto, ON M3C 1J7; 416-441-1111 or 1-800-619-7301 ext. 223; dmuir@presbyterian.ca.

Mississauga, Ont., Dixie Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Reid Chudley, PO Box 16, Hillsburgh, ON N0B 1Z0; 519-855-6216; r.chudley@bellnet.ca.

Mississauga, Ont., St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Peter Barrow, 24 Stavebank Rd. N., Mississauga, ON L5G 2T5; 905-278-8907; standrewspc@bellnet.ca.

Richmond Hill, Ont., Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Daniel Scott, 39 Saint Ave., Bradford, ON L3Z 3E6; 905-775-7274; ddscott@rogers.com.

Scarborough, Ont., Westminster Presbyterian Church, Interim Moderator Rev. Ann Blane, 1300 Danforth Rd., Scarborough, ON M1J 1E8; 416-267-7897.

Toronto, Ont., Guildwood Community; Rev. J. P. Ian Morrison, 17 Earswick Dr., Scarborough, ON M1E 1C7; 416-265-0135; Ian.morrison@sympatico.ca.

West Toronto Presbytery, York Memorial; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Lance Odland, 11 Cross St., Toronto, ON M9N 2B8; 416-241-9533; lance@westonpresbyterianchurch.com.

To announce your pulpit vacancy:
vacancies@presbyterianrecord.ca; phone 1 800 619 7301 x308; fax 416 441 2823.
Notices are $40 for one-time; $25 for four insertions or more. Deadline to have your notice added is six weeks prior to month; so, for February 2008 the deadline will be Dec. 15th, 2007.

Synod of Southwestern Ontario

Ancaster, St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Rev. Anne Yee-Hibbs, c/o Erskine Presbyterian Church, 19 Pearl St. N., Hamilton, ON L8R 2Y6; synodaec@on.aibn.com.

Burlington, Knox; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Philip Wilson, c/o Trinity Presbyterian Church, 720 Ninth Ave., Hamilton, ON L8T 2A3; 905-385-5984; revpmw@auracom.com.

Caledonia, Caledonia Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Jeff Chalmers, 117 Argyle St. N., Caledonia, ON N3W 1B8; 905-765-4524; jeff.chalmers@ontario.ca.

Chatsworth, St. Andrew's Presbyterian

EXECUTIVE POSITION WITHIN THE LIFE AND MISSION AGENCY

The Presbyterian Church in Canada, through the Life and Mission Agency, is inviting applications for the executive position of Associate Secretary, Communication and Resource Production at the national office in Toronto. The Associate Secretary will spearhead innovative communication techniques to present the gospel to a 21st century audience and will equip congregations to do the same. A complete position description is available on the webpage at www.presbyterian.ca.

The deadline for receiving applications is WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 19TH, 2007

Applications should be submitted to:
The General Secretary, Life and Mission Agency
50 Wynford Dr., Toronto, ON, M3C 1J7
Email: rfee@presbyterian.ca

Church; Dornoch, Latona Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Michelle Butterfield-Kocis, c/o Westminister Presbyterian Church, PO Box 359, Paisley, ON N0G 2N0; 519-353-6020; Westminster.stpaul@bmts.com.

Fonthill, Kirk-on-the-Hill; Rev. Dr. Jack Neil, c/o First Presbyterian Church, 176 Elm St., Port Colborne, ON L3K 4N6; 905-834-4288.

Forest, St. James; Interim Moderator Rev. Daniel Roushorne, c/o St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, PO Box 1381, Corunna, ON N0N 1G0; 519-862-3641; sapcorunna@xcelco.on.ca.

Hamilton, MacNab St.; Rev. George Robertson, 80 Mill St. N., PO Box 221, Waterdown, ON L0R 2H0; 905-689-8115; rev.george@bellnet.ca.

Hamilton, New Westminster; Half-time; Rev. R. Docherty, c/o St. John's Presbyterian Church, 10 Mountain St., Grimsby, ON L3M 3J6; 905-945-5352; admin@stjohnsgrimsby.com.

Hamilton, St. Columba; Dr. Clyde Ervine, 165 Charlton Ave. W., Hamilton, ON L8P 2C8; 905-522-9098; cervine.central@on.aibn.com.

London, St. Lawrence; Half-time; Interim Moderator Rev. Lynn Nichol, 783 Victoria St., London, ON N5Y 4C9; 519-434-2476; briarhill33@yahoo.ca.

Mitchell, Knox Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Catherine Calkin, 3403 Perth Rd. 130, R. R. 2, St. Pauls, ON N0K 1V0; 519-393-6395; calkin@quadro.net.

Molesworth, St. Andrew's; Part-time position; John Zondag, 220 Livingstone Ave. N., Listowel, ON N4W 1P9; 519-291-4690; jzondag@wightman.ca.

Port Dover, Knox and Hagersville, St. Andrew's (two-point charge); Interim Moderator Rev. Kathy Morden, Knox Presbyterian Church, 2058 Main St. N., Jarvis, ON N0A 1J0; 519-587-2565; knoxchal@bellnet.ca.

Sarnia, Paterson Memorial; Vacancy begins April 1, 2008; Rev. Ena Van Zoren, PO Box 421, Wyoming, ON N0N 1T0; 519-845-1931; enavanz@gmail.com.

Simcoe, St. Paul's; Rev. Dr. Stan Cox, Interim Moderator c/o St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, 85 Lot St., Simcoe, ON N3Y 1S4; 519-426-1845; sppc@kwic.com; www.stpaulssimcoe.com.

Stoney Creek, Heritage Green; Half-time position; Interim Moderator Rev. Bob Geddes, c/o The South Gate Presbyterian Church, 120 Claredon Ave., Hamilton, ON L9A 3A5; 905-385-7444; bobgeddes@mountaincable.net.

Thornbury, St. Paul's; Rev. Alice Wilson, PO Box 20004, Hanover, ON N4N 3T1; standrews@wightman.ca.

Wallaceburg, Knox Presbyterian; Interim Moderator Rev. Mike Maroney, c/o First Presbyterian Church, 60 Fifth St., Chatham, ON N7M 4V7; 519-352-2313; maroney@firstchatham.org.

Woodstock, Knox; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Lonnie Atkinson, c/o St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, 56 Thames St. S., Ingersoll, ON N5C 2S9; 519-485-3390; stpauls@execulink.com.

Synod of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario

Carberry, Man., Knox-Zion Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Jean Bryden, 808 9th St. NW, Portage la Prairie, MB R1N 3L3; 204-857-4815; jbryden@mts.net.

Selkirk, Man., Knox Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Robert Murray, PO Box 222, Pinawa, MB R0E 1L0; 204-753-8439; pcf@granite.mb.ca.

Synod of Saskatchewan

Saskatoon, Circle West; Parkview; Rev. Amanda Currie, 436 Spadina Cres. E, Saskatoon, SK S7K 3G6; 306-242-0525; standrews@sasktel.net.

Weyburn, Knox; Interim Moderator Rev. Tae-Wook (Jonathan) Kwon; PO Box 7, Grenfell, SK S0G 2B0; 306-697-2612; joyktw@hotmail.com.

Synod of Alberta and the Northwest

Chauvin, Alta., Westminster and Wainwright, Alta., St. Andrew's Pastoral Charge; Rev. Stephen Haughland, PO Box 663, Killam, AB T0B 2L0; 780-385-2147; tepkje@telus.net.

Edmonton, Alta., Callingwood Road Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Bob Calder, 6607 31st Ave., Edmonton, AB T6K 4B3; 780-462-2446; crpc2007@gmail.com.

Edmonton, Alta., Strathcona Presbyterian Church; www.spchurch.ca; Interim Moderator Rev. Annabelle Wallace, 423-14259 50th St. NW, Edmonton, AB T5A 5J2; 780-633-0170; annabellew@shaw.ca.

Fort McMurray, Alta., Faith Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Dr. Lloyd Fourney, 18512 92nd Ave., Edmonton, AB T5T 1P4; 780-481-1614; fourney@hotmail.com.

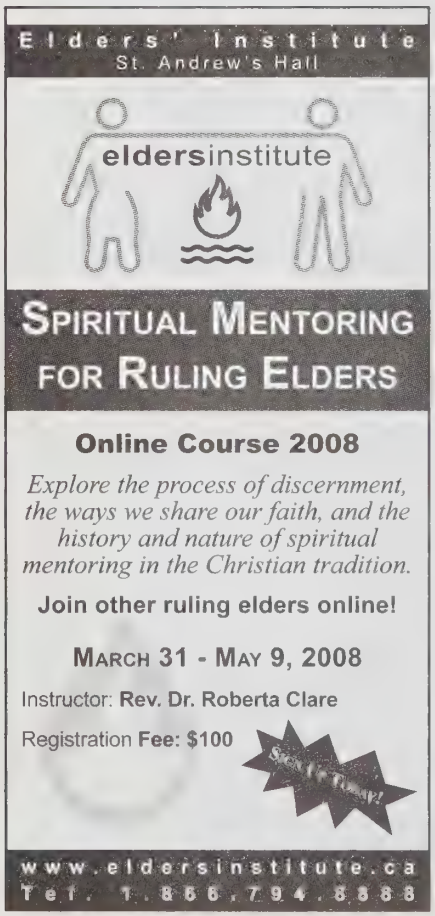
Medicine Hat, Alta., St. John's Presbyterian Church; Interim Moderator Rev. Diane V. Beach, 212 Perry Cres. NE, Medicine Hat, AB T1C 1X3; home 403-526-3512, office 403-526-4542; dianebeach@shaw.ca.

Synod of British Columbia

Nanaimo, St. Andrew's; Dr. John F. Allan, 4235 Departure Bay Rd., Nanaimo, BC V9T 1C9; jfallan@shaw.ca.

Slocan Valley, St. Andrew's; Interim Moderator Rev. Gavin Robertson, c/o First Presbyterian Church, 1139 Pine Ave., Trail, BC V1R 4R2; 250-364-0335; firstpc@telus.net.

Vancouver, Chinese Presbyterian Church, Associate Minister, English ministry; Rev. Dr. Ted Siverns; 604-530-2401; tsiverns@lightspeed.ca.



Victoria, Chinese (bilingual, English/Cantonese); Rev. H. McNabb, 760 Latoria Rd., Victoria, BC V9C 3A4; hamcnabb@shaw.ca

Obituaries

AUSTEN, Rev. Fred, passed away on Nov. 9, 2006, after a brave two-month battle with cancer. Fred is survived by his wife Janet, six children and 13 grandchildren. Fred was born in Guelph, Ont., in 1929 and entered into pastoral ministry after a 13-year career with Eaton's. He served congregations in Hamilton, Brampton, Toronto and Lindsay, Ont., in addition to pastoral duties in P.E.I. and Quebec.

Fred had a compassionate heart and generous spirit and freely gave of his energy and resources. It is said that "the world was his parish." Fred was a caring visitor, chaplain and padre in the communities he ministered to and was an active and supportive presbyter. He was also a passionate Blue Jays and Maple Leaf supporter. He is deeply missed by the many people whose lives he touched and will long be remembered for his faithful and sacrificial witness.

BURNHAM, Tom, aged 98, and a long-time member of First Presbyterian Church, Chatham, Ont.

COMPTON, George Daniel, aged 68, died on Aug. 24, 2007. An elder, choir member and church school superintendent, he was an active member of St. Mark's Presbyterian Church in Charlottetown, P.E.I. George and his quiet and exemplary service are greatly missed. He is survived by his wife Eleanor, daughter Laurie Thompson, son Lloyd, and five grandchildren.

HURD, Margaret Eleanor Winnifred, aged 86 and member of St. Paul's, Ottawa, Ont., passed away on Sept. 12, 2007. Margaret was a former member, elder and representative elder at St. Andrew's, Kirkland Lake, Ont.; a former member at Memorial, Sylvan Lake, Alta.; and a long-time co-convenor of the Dorothy Lake Camp committee.

LEWIES, Louise, aged 99 and a long-time member of First Presbyterian Church, Chatham, Ont.

MARTIN, John, passed away on Aug. 15, 2007, at age 84. John was an elder of Macbeth Presbyterian Church prior to its amalgamation with Knox Presbyterian Church, Selkirk, Man. John was a faithful member and elder of Knox and will be missed by his wife Lucy, their family and his church family. ■

Applications are now being received for the
2008 LILIAN FORSYTH SCHOLARSHIP
IN CHURCH MUSIC
For information, contact:
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Knox Presbyterian Church
120 Lisgar Street
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 0C2
or Fax: (613) 238-4775
E-mail: knoxottawa@bellnet.ca
www.knoxottawa.ca
Information and application forms are also accessible on the site www.knoxottawa.ca
Registration deadline is February 15, 2008



A Real Story

Like Father, like Son, generous inside and out. BY REV. DR. J. H. HANS KOUWENBERG



I remember the Christmas we celebrated a year after coming to Canada with my family from the Netherlands in 1951. We'd moved from a farm in Athens, just outside of Brockville, Ont., where we'd first been boarded with a couple of Dutch brothers who had sponsored us, to a big, old clapboard farmhouse which my folks had rented for our family in the village of Tincap. I'd just turned seven, and was attending Grade 1 in the one-room country schoolhouse with my sister that fall.

When I was a teenager, I met a retired teacher at the Presbyterian church which we attended in Ottawa who told me she'd also attended the same school in Tincap, and she said the village had been named Tincap because the school had a tin cap roof. The school building was still standing in the 1970s when I visited and I took a photo of it—only, now it was used as somebody's home.

I remember we had a real tree that Christmas, set up in what I recall was a largely empty living room, by the front window. I think there were also some little white candles on the branches—which would be lit on Christmas Eve. The ornaments on the tree weren't much to write about. Just "off the boat," I know we were still pretty poor. There were also three balls of pink popcorn hanging from the branches—gifts from a neighbour woman who ran the village grocery store and post office—and three oranges under the tree. Apart from these six items I can't remember any other gifts that year.

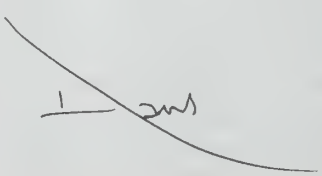
Closer to Christmas, I remember looking at these meager gifts and saying, "This has got to be the worst Christmas ever!" I suppose I thought back to the pretty good St. Nicholas Days we'd had in the Netherlands, with all kinds of goodies and gifts laid out by Sinterklaas on the evening of December 5th. Well, my mother must have overheard my mutterings of disgust, for I also recall a lengthy lecture on the real meaning of Christmas. (Mother never spanked, she only lectured, and that had a lasting effect.)

So what is the real meaning of Christmas? It is, of course, the story about the birth of the baby Jesus in Bethlehem. It is the story of God who came to visit us and save us. It is the story of the incarnation and the atonement of God. It is the story of God's kindness and mercy and compassion in Jesus Christ. It is the story that God is real and that he loves us and will never leave or forsake us. It is the story that God is with us in every situation in which we may find ourselves.

You may think this is "the worst Christmas ever" and I can't blame you. Maybe you've lost your job, or you don't like your job. Maybe you can't get what you need or want for your family. Maybe it's your first, or just another, lonely Christmas alone. You've lost a dear loved one. Your children have left home, or you have very few friends. Or, you've got someone very sick at home or in the hospital. There are all kinds of significant reasons far more legitimate than I have mentioned as to why "this is the worst Christmas ever." I don't want to minimize or take away anything from the pain and pressure you may feel. It's real and it won't easily go away.

But have you heard, have you meditated on the real meaning of Christmas? "God is with us." God came to visit us. God loves us. God came to identify with us, to be with us, to develop a relationship with us, to establish solidarity with us in our need. God became incarnate among us, in the baby who became a man. He was like "one of us;" yet, unlike all men or women that have ever been born. God came and lived and suffered and died among us and for us. God was risen in Jesus Christ for us and in us. Therefore, God understands us and our very human situation. God lives with us in our situations. And God can make a difference in our situations.

I hope the Christmas story will not be just some sentimental scene, or memory, for you. I pray it will be a real story of real "comfort and joy." This is the story: God took up residence among us. "The Word became flesh and blood and moved into our neighborhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son, generous inside and out, true from start to finish." (Eugene Peterson, *The Message*) ■



Hans Kouwenberg



Ama Ampofa, age 9, Gateway Community, Toronto



Learn more at www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd

Presbyterian World Service &

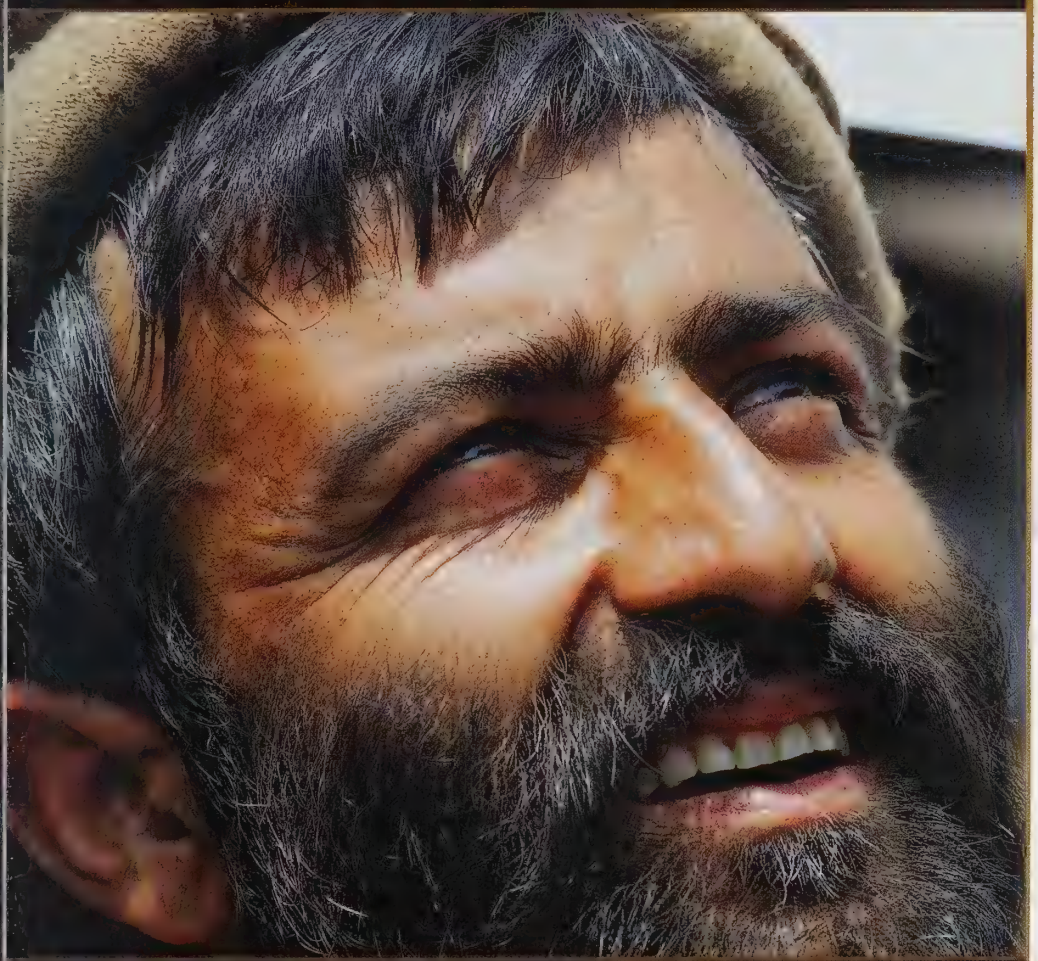
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5417 05

2006-2007 ANNUAL REPORT

ENOUGH FOR ALL



Presbyterian World Service & Development

This is an abridged version of PWS&D's report in The Acts and Proceedings of the 133rd General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd



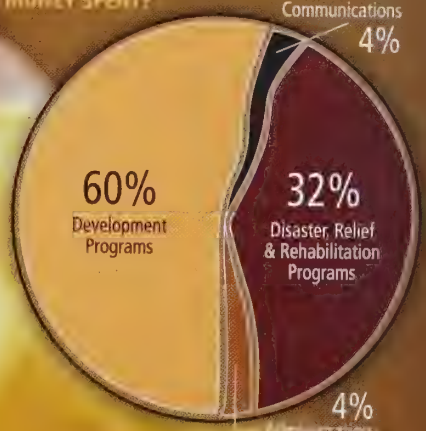
DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

On August 16, 2006, at the XVI International AIDS Conference in Toronto, Alexandra Lee and Mia Sams, two children from Thornhill Presbyterian Church, stood beside Her Royal Highness Crown Princess Mette-Marit of Norway. They were there to open an exhibit of letters by children and teenagers from around the globe asking world leaders to keep their promise to respond to the growing AIDS pandemic.

Alexandra and Mia's letters were inspired by the work of The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian in Malawi, a PWS&D partner reaching out to care for orphans and people affected by HIV and AIDS. Alexandra was moved to tears as she read her letter to Canada's Prime Minister: "You have made many wonderful promises, so wonderful it could help tons of people. However, some of your promises haven't happened yet." Alexandra read. "I know you are probably very busy with all your work, but it is my dream that someday we will find a cure."

"I truly believe that young people are our chance to shape the future. We need their enthusiasm,

HOW WAS THE MONEY SPENT?



The chart excludes the funds that were spent for the Presbyterian, United, Mennonite and Anglican (PUMA) tsunami project. Those were exceptional funds that flowed through PWS&D's books as the lead agency for the project – but represent collective funds.

energy and creativity," said the Crown Princess, a UNAIDS Special Representative. Indeed, Alexandra and Mia are two of many over the past year who have challenged us with their drive to confront the oppressive poverty that makes people vulnerable to AIDS and to care for those affected.

The relief and development work of PWS&D is having an impact in communities devastated by disasters and affected by poverty. The Towards a World Without AIDS campaign is one way that The Presbyterian Church in Canada is keeping its promise to the poor and vulnerable. It is a privilege to join the team at PWS&D and see how Canadian Presbyterians share Christ's message of love and hope with our neighbours in the world.

Kenneth Kim
Director



In 2006 congregations and individuals also donated [illegible] in cash and gifts in kind to PWS&D through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. With contributions from other CIDA partners and matching grants from CIDA, PWS&D was the lead agency for programs worth over $1.4 million dollars in 2006.

STATEMENT OF REVENUE

For the year ended December 31, 2006

REVENUES	2006	2005
Undesignated contributions	$ 1,663,310	$ 1,262,129
Undesignated bequests	14,352	114,229
Designated contributions – projects	870,648	477,075
Designated contributions – emergency relief	681,816	1,095,519
Designated contributions – Tsunami relief	2,995	*1,223,017
Designated contributions – South Asia Earthquake relief	13,799	*200,094
Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)	458,000	398,000
Canadian International Development Agency: Youth Internship	13,000	0
Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA): Tsunami (PUMA)	**4,200,000	**1,500,000
Government of the Province of Saskatchewan	17,984	9,680
Other income (interest)	108,335	62,057
Total	**$ 8,044,239**	**$ 6,341,800**

STATEMENT OF EXPENDITURES

EXPENDITURES	2006	2005
Disaster, Relief and Rehabilitation	$ 511,015	$ 766,774
Tsunami Relief	528,500	739,622
Tsunami Relief – CIDA/PUMA	**4,148,949	**1,527,655
South Asia Earthquake Relief	33,031	178,177
CIDA/PWS&D Overseas Program	585,049	647,784
Presbyterian constituency funded projects	890,138	765,560
Memberships, partnerships and coalitions	257,684	243,913
Resource, communications, promotion, grants	129,397	118,149
Program support	272,697	192,913
Administration	135,041	160,228
Total	**$ 7,491,501**	**$ 5,340,775**

*PWS&D worked ecumenically to access government matching funds for donations to "Tsunami Relief" and "South Asia Earthquake Relief."

**This reflects some of the matching funds for [illegible] Presbyterian, United, Mennonite and Anglican [illegible] donations.

EMERGENCY RELIEF & REHABILITATION

• Tsunami • South Asia Earthquake • Darfur Conflict • Kenya Drought • Malawi Drought
• Central America Emergency Preparedness • Indonesia Earthquake • Indonesia Aceh Floods

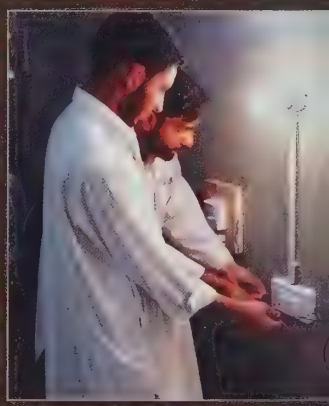
In 2006-2007 PWS&D responded to disasters caused by drought, floods, earthquakes and conflict. Emergency food, water and medical supplies were provided in times of desperate need while longer-term efforts focused on restoring livelihoods, food security and rebuilding houses and essential community infrastructure. We continue to help communities rebuild after the 2004 tsunami in Southeast Asia and the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan, India and Afghanistan. We also responded to emergencies that do not make news headlines.

PWS&D maximizes relief efforts by working cooperatively with other churches through Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGB) and Action by Churches Together (ACT). Matching funds from CIDA also helped PWS&D respond to the tsunami and South Asia earthquake while support from the Manitoba Council for International Cooperation boosted our response to disasters in the Philippines.





Dr. Mark treats a patient a few days after an earthquake devastated communities in Indonesia.



Muhammad Sharif learns carpentry to help rebuild after the 2005 earthquake in South Asia.

Tanzania Floods • Palestine, Emergency Assistance • Lebanon Conflict • Iraq Conflict
India Floods • Philippines Leyte Landslides • Philippines Super Typhoon Durian • China Floods



As conflict intensified, Action by Churches Together continued to provide shelter, food, water, health care, education and other essential services in Darfur, Sudan.



Some of the 737 new houses built in communities affected by the 2004 tsunami.



Relief supplies were delivered to communities destroyed by flooding in Leiyang, China.

TOWARDS A WORLD WITHOUT AIDS

As of April 5, 2007 over $1,178,816 has been raised through the Towards a World Without AIDS campaign, since it was launched in June 2004—over and above regular donations to PWS&D and *Presbyterians Sharing*... These gifts have helped launch innovative programs to prevent the spread of HIV and care for people living with and affected by AIDS.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada worked with churches from around the world to prepare for The XVI International AIDS Conference held in Toronto August 13-18, 2006. We joined other members of The Canadian Council of Churches to call on Canada to help stop HIV and AIDS. Funds from CIDA helped PWS&D partners from India, Malawi, Nigeria and Kenya attend the Ecumenical Pre-Conference held before the main event.



Louis, a Church of North India field worker, talks to communities along the Kolkata-Asansol highway about the prevention of HIV and AIDS.





Nutritional supplements are distributed to HIV-positive mothers in Malawi to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV.



Presbyterians marched with people of faith from around the world to remind people and governments to fight HIV and AIDS.



MALAWI

PWS&D helped The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian partners scale up food security, nutrition, water, orphan care, AIDS and malaria control programs. Exciting results include a new community based child care centre and a primary school program for orphans that helped 400 children attend school by providing them with uniforms and supplies. Families caring for orphans were trained in income generating activities and volunteers were trained in home-based care methods. Twelve new boreholes and 321 latrines were constructed to improve sanitation, helping to reduce waterborne diseases by 87% in target communities. Food was distributed to those affected by drought and farmers were taught sustainable agriculture techniques to increase production on their small farms. A new five-year malaria control project is providing bed nets and teaching malaria prevention methods.

Jane Mumba learned how to grow legumes (soya beans and peanuts) to increase soil fertility and provide a more balanced diet for her children through Ekwendeni Hospital's integrated agriculture program in Malawi. Before joining the project, Jane's family struggled to have enough to eat and two children died from malnutrition-related diseases, but since the project Jane has seen her family's health improve significantly.



The PWS&D Committee reviews and plans PWS&D relief and development programs, communication strategies and refugee sponsorship.

A maize mill is helping communities earn money to support orphan care while providing a valuable service to families in the community.



KENYA

The Presbyterian Church of East Africa adopted a very progressive HIV/AIDS policy at its 2006 General Assembly. The policy received wide acceptance within the church leadership, many of whom have been trained by the PCEA AIDS program with the support of PWS&D. Shauri Yako Support Centre has assisted over 800 young people, many of them orphans, with basic needs such as food and clothing. The project also helped 80 children attend school by helping with school fees, uniforms and books.

TANZANIA

The Africa Inland Church of Tanzania expanded their sustainable agriculture work, striving to increase food security, nutrition, farm incomes and improve the supply of clean water. In the past year, AICT trained 300 farmers on ecologically sound farming techniques, distributed 1,500 hoes and trained over 160 community members on water resource management. AICT plans to construct 12 new wells and four rainwater harvesting tanks over the next five years.

Undesignated donations help PWS&D respond immediately to disasters and support innovative community development projects.



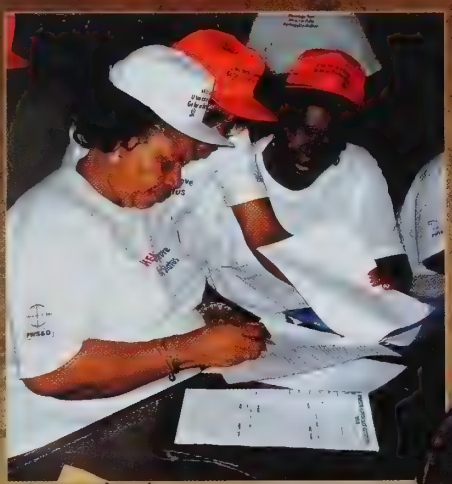
Grecia Augusto, a widow with three children, built her house and set up a successful hairstyling salon with loans through COCAMO's programs. Grecia is pictured with loan officers Esperanza and Costas.

MOZAMBIQUE

Cooperation Canada Mozambique's (COCAMO) public health, clean water and micro-credit projects are making a tremendous difference in northern Mozambique. A COCAMO credit union in Nampula is recognized as a tremendous success. PWS&D is working with COCAMO on a five-year plan to replicate it throughout northern Mozambique.



With the loans through COCAMO's programs, Maheja and her husband have opened a dressmaking shop, a mobile fast food stand and a small auto parts salvage business. Now she has 13 employees and is able to pay university tuition for two of her children. Maheja is also learning how to read and write — a dream come true.



NIGERIA

The Presbyterian Church of Nigeria is training women to participate in elections and advocate at the State and Federal levels. Local churches are training their members on HIV and AIDS: how it is spread and how it can be prevented.



Esther Aruku graduated from the Garu training program three years ago and now makes a living weaving cloth for special ceremonies, such as funerals and weddings. She has trained 17 pupils, and currently has 10 more apprenticing under her.

GHANA

The Presbyterian Church of Ghana's Garu Community Based Rehabilitation project effectively integrates differently-abled students into regular schools. Garu also runs a successful training program in shoemaking, sewing and weaving for youth, regardless of their abilities. Many Garu graduates are now operating their own business and training other apprentices. The Gambaga Outcast Home supports women accused of witchcraft and outcast from their community with the support of PWS&D and The PCG. Over 500 women passed through the home in the last ten years and have been successfully reintegrated into their communities.



Accused of using witchcraft to make her niece sick Sheta Burgi found refuge at the Gambaga Outcast Home, her face still bruised and swollen by being beaten by some in her community.

A well built by PWS&D provides 65 women at the Gambaga Outcast Home access to clean water.

PWS&D's Loaves and Fishes Fund was begun in 2007 to effectively use undesignated planned gifts — bequests, gift annuities, insurance policies, appreciated securities — by using the interest and principal over seven years.

PWS&D gratefully acknowledges the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), which co-funds some of our development projects, relief programs, strategic conferences and youth internships.

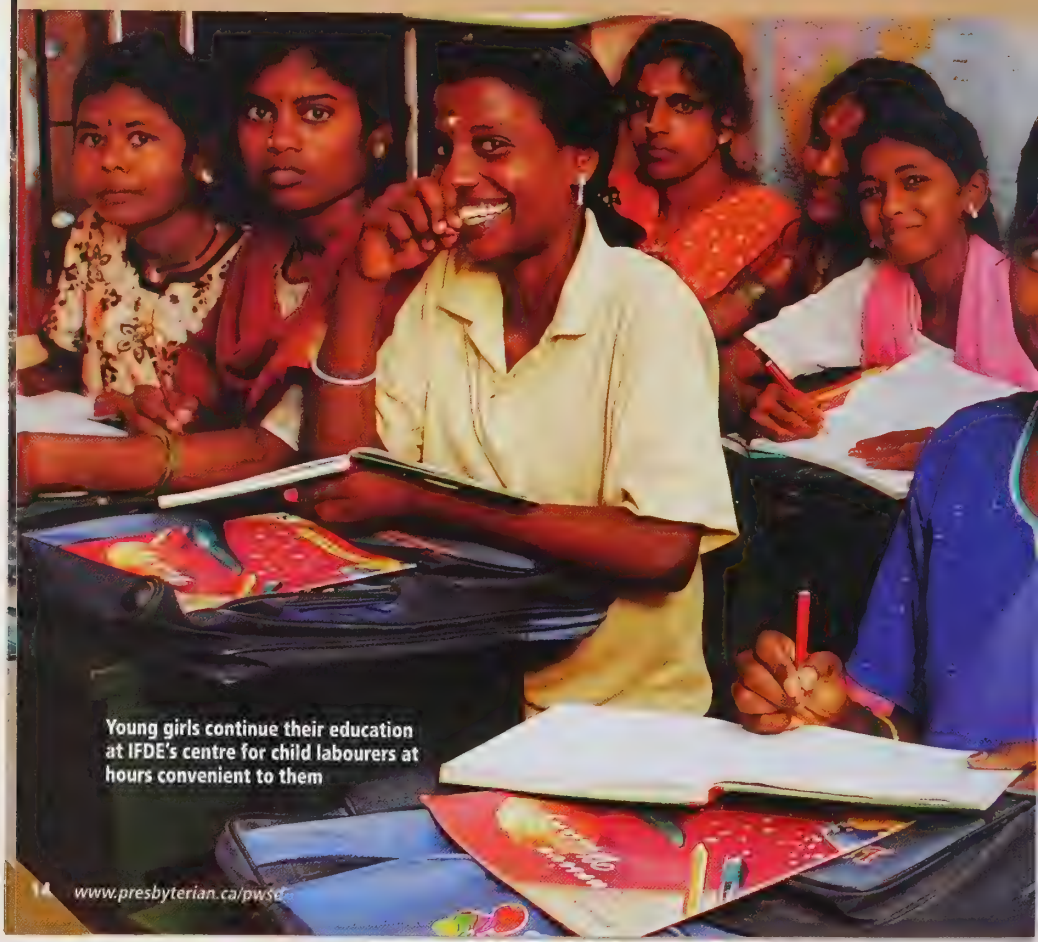
INDIA

Community health volunteers trained by the Church of North India improve health and work with women on village development in Jobat, Amkhut, Mendha, Ratlam, Barwani, Hatpiplyia and Mandleshwar. Nearly 70,000 patients were seen through community health centres and children in 55 schools were immunized through extensive vaccination campaigns. Self-help groups were started to improve family incomes.

The Institute for Development Education (IFDE) and Roofs for the Roofless continue to help rural and urban communities in southern India break cycles of poverty through self-help groups, tuition classes for youth and programs empowering women. In addition, Roofs for the Roofless' veterinary program improves the health of cattle, goats, and sheep, while their rural community college provides vocational training to youth in various trades. (92% of the grads–initially school drop outs–have found



Arumugam fishes with nets provided by IFDE to help families in Murugan Nagar and Buddhavedu earn an income.



Young girls continue their education at IFDE's centre for child labourers at hours convenient to them

employment). IFDE workers are also using their experiences in the slums and rural villages to help tsunami-affected families rebuild their communities.

The Madurai Non-Formal Education Center's mobile medical clinics treated 5,000 people and promoted mother and child health, nutrition, family planning, and the prevention of HIV/AIDS. Their women's associations' petitions to the government for street lights, sanitation facilities, meeting halls, water tanks, paved roads, bus routes, resettlement land, and old age pensions are increasingly successful.



A village health worker in Mendha teaches people practical ways they can improve their health.

KAIROS

The $65,000 that PWS&D contributes to Kairos is matched by CIDA to support programs in debt cancellation, ecologically sustainable economic development, just trade practices, conflict resolution, peace building and human rights.



EL SALVADOR

IMU educates women about their human rights to ensure that local and national governments take women's issues into consideration when public policies are being legislated. They also help women's associations acquire skills to run income generation projects.

GUATEMALA

The Fraternidad of Maya Presbyterials helps communities in Guatemala access education, credit and health care. They are helping communities start organic farming and plant trees to improve groundwater resources. Literacy programs are helping women and men become agents of change in their communities. Training in sewing and embroidery and revolving loan funds are helping women start small businesses and improve the local economy.



While PWS&D raises funds separately from *Presbyterians Sharing*... we work closely together in mission. PWS&D supports the relief and development programs of our partners overseas. Funds from *Presbyterians Sharing*... support Canadian mission personnel working with partner churches and organizations as well as other mission related programs in Canada and overseas.



The Fraternidad helps women like Maria Elena Puac Poz in La Estancia village buy materials to produce quality weavings that can be sold to improve her family's quality of life.

NICARAGUA

Supporting vulnerable children and youth, and improving food security are the focuses for PWS&D in Nicaragua. Children, youth and adults are receiving quality education and vocational training. A special shelter is helping young victims of sexual abuse learn to deal with the trauma of abuse and restore their self-confidence and dignity. Groups of health and nutrition educators help families improve their nutrition and subsistence farmers are learning ways to improve yields from denuded parcels of land.



Mothers learn how to improve nutrition and development for their children in Managua, Nicaragua through small groups that teach early childhood development.



Guillermo Hernandez, an agronomist with the Fraternidad, discusses plant health with Elida Cayax Pixtún in La Estancia, Guatemala.



GET INVOLVED

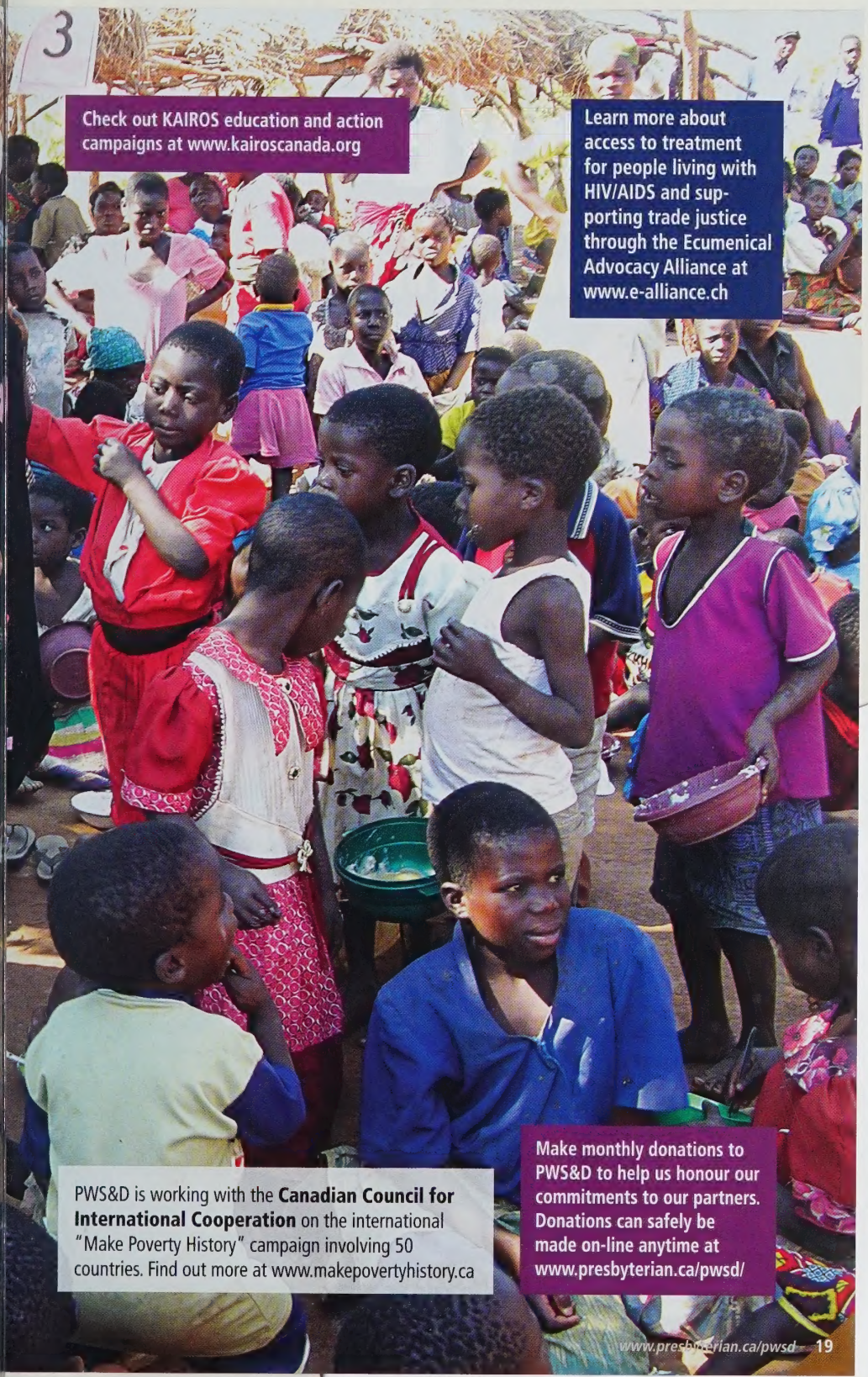
PWS&D programs are possible only with the support of individuals and congregations. Every year congregations get involved through emergency appeals, special projects, educational workshops and worship services. Our partners continually express thanks for the prayers and support of Canadian Presbyterians.

In 2006, The Presbyterian Church in Canada approved six **refugee sponsorship** cases from three congregations. If all cases are successful, 13 refugees originating from Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, Myanmar (Burma), and Nigeria will come to Canada.

Canadian Foodgrains Bank growing projects help provide resources for food security and nutrition programs.

PWS&D staff & committee members continue to engage congregations by speaking on Sundays and at special events. **PWS&D Sunday** is the first Sunday in February.

Help support fair trade through TransFair Canada and worker's rights through the Maquila Solidarity Network. Find out more about their campaigns at www.transfair.ca and www.maquilasolidarity.org


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Check out KAIROS education and action campaigns at www.kairoscanada.org
Learn more about access to treatment for people living with HIV/AIDS and supporting trade justice through the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance at www.e-alliance.ch
PWS&D is working with the **Canadian Council for International Cooperation** on the international "Make Poverty History" campaign involving 50 countries. Find out more at www.makepovertyhistory.ca
Make monthly donations to PWS&D to help us honour our commitments to our partners. Donations can safely be made on-line anytime at www.presbyterian.ca/pwsd/



Presbyterian by profession of faith, ecumenical by confession of faith, and inclusive in our practice of faith, we gladly serve women and men, young and old, according to their need and regardless of their faith. In a world with too much poverty, injustice and oppression concentrated in nations of the South, we recognize the interrelation between our affluence and the suffering of others.

– PWS&D Mission Statement

PWS&D thanks PWS&D staff, friends, volunteers and Action by Churches Together for the pictures used in this report.

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